

MORAL ESSAYS

AND

Discourses,

Upon Several

SUBJECTS,

Chiefly Relating to the

Present Times.

By a Person of HONOUR.

L O N D O N :

Printed by *H. Clark*, for *John Taylor*, at the  
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# THE

## Preface to the READER.

**T**HE Reason which induced me to write this Book, was with good Design, to reform those unhappy Vices and Miscarriages, which have proved so fatally mischievous to our present Happiness and Tranquility; and therefore you will find, that I have not spared any Character, or Condition of Men, who have lived dissolutely, or acted contrary to the Principles of sober Virtue and Morality: I have ever lov'd to display the Characters of Truth, and to set forth a lively Representation of Things, as they appear fairly visible, and conspicuous to the World. This sincere dealing, is the main Purpose of these following Discourses, which are the small Issue and Recreation of my own private Thoughts and Meditations, during my two Years Retirement in the Country, where I spent much of my Time in serious Reflections, upon the various Changes and Instability of Sublunary Things. And in Writing these Essays, I have made it my great Care, as much as 'tis possible, to avoid those common Roads, and ordinary Paths, which the Genius of Men's Wit ordinarily travel in: And there are few of these Subjects that have ever been treated on before, though I confess, that Provisions of such Vir-  
gin Themes, are now grown scanty, and are very hard to be found; when the very best and noblest Writers, with all their Stores of Wit and Learning, are often at a loss, and forced to use cold Meats to garnish up their Table: And tho' great Wits, (like French Cooks) can make several kinds of Dishes of the same sort of Meat, and so disguise them by mixtures of

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*Sawce, and other nice Delicacies, that the very taste of the Meat the Dish is made of, is hardly discernable; yet to find new Subjects to Write on, or to Polish old ones with that curious Niceneſe and Delicacy of Fancy, as may please the more Witty and Ingenious, is a Task far more intricate and difficult to Endeavour; and therefore I am ſatisfied, that I need neither conſult the Oracle, nor yet pretend to the Spirit of Propheſie, to foretell, that theſe Enſuing Diſcourſes can never reſiſh well with all ſorts of Readers, where the Fancies of Men are ſo generally Critical and Cenſorious, that Momus like, they Carpe at every thing that offends them, and their Judgments are ſo viciously depraved, that they are always diſpoſed to follow what is Evil, but rarely inclined to embrace the Good.*

*And now, among other Popular Vices, there are none ſo predominant of late, as the Art of lying, Diſſimulation and Falſity, which do ſo generally prevail over all our Words and Actions, as moſt now-a-days, look on Truth to be but a meer Chimera, and not a thing real; often repeated in all our Promiſes, but ſeldom perform'd in any of our Practices; for now he who cannot rallie at Religion, and Court thoſe Perſons he diſlikes, Praise thoſe Actions he deteſts, and Speak what he does not think, nay, and Promise what he never means to perform, is in our impure Age, ſo immodiſhly qualified, as he is unſit, either to make a good Courtier, a great States-man, or ſo much as a politick Gentleman for the Times.*

*Thus Policy that ſhould refine our Knowledge, does now corrupt our Practices; and we rather ſtudy to act ill, than ſtrive to do well, ſlighting God's Holy Laws, to follow wicked Cuſtoms and Examples, which have made ſo deep an Impreſſion on our Minds and Affections, that we worſhip no other Deity but ſenſual Pleaſures,*

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sures, and serve no other God but Self-Interest; making Vertue Mercenary to those servile ends of Flattery and worldly Advantage, while we neglect a more honest Truth, and Sincerity of goodness in our Actions, as things very unsuitable to the present Fashion and Practice of Gentlemen. Thus, Debauchery is so deeply rooted in Mens minds, that 'tis grown Powerful and Imperious, as it has been settled by long Custom, and countenanc'd by great Authority: Vanity and Vice are now follow'd, as a common Mode, and not look'd on as any real Crime, or Scandal; when Oaths, (which the Apostle tells us,) ought to be used for the ending of Strife, are employed to adorn and fill up our Talk; and we are generally become so wickedly Vain and Proud, as we esteem nothing good, that hinders us at any rate to be great.

Therefore, these following Discourses will have nothing in them, of the Nature of the pleasant Manna in the Wilderness, for that gave a graceful Gusto, answerable to every Israelites differing Tasse; but (I am sure,) these will only give a relish to a virtuous Palate, and so must needs prove unsavory, and disagreeable to the profane Opinions, and vain Debaucheries of the Vitioso's of our Times. But really my Design is, as far from Complementing such Mens wicked Lives, as their wicked Lives will be from following my pious Advice; and therefore, I cannot help those who are offended for speaking Truth, and hate to be reprov'd for their Follies. I must freely own, I could not forbear to represent the Characters of any sort, or Profession of Men, whom I thought guilty of any Irregular Vice, or Immorality, now of scandalous Fame and Fashion in the World; and this I have done, that I may reform the Indiscretion, and (if I may so say,) the Idleness of Mankind, which like Despair, will possess no place in our Minds, but  
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where it first finds a Vacuity of Virtue; since light, vain Notions, would never take up our Employment, and become our Business, but only for want of our being Prepossess'd with more serious and solid Entertainments; God having infused a lively active Principle in Man, which nothing but Death can suppress; and therefore, when Men cease to act, they cease to be; and every forbearance of a good and virtuous Action, makes Room for, and gives Place to fiery vicious ones; our corrupt Natures, being like Mill-stones in Motion, if they want Grist to grinde, they will be sure to fire and spoil one another.

But now, not to detain you any longer in the Preliminary of this Discourse, I must observe unto you, That Nature never gave me any great share of Wit, nor yet I my self, ever made any Improvement of Learning; therefore, I can only daub with untempered Mortar, and must seem rather to Scribble than Write. And now, when these Discourses want those two main Ingredients, your own Experience will too soon convince you, what dull lumpish Stuff they must needs be Compos'd of, that have not the fiery brisk Elements of Wit and Learning in their Constitution, which must needs render them Impotent and Barren, as to the bringing forth any Ingenious or Agreeable Entertainment to the Reader, more than what (I hope,) they will yield to increase the Growth of sober Virtue and Morality in the World; and which is a sufficient Apology to justify my good Intentions, and to Plead Pardon for the Freedom of this Publication.

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The FIRST

## DISCOURSE,

*Of a Pious, Retir'd, Contemplative Life ;  
and the Changes and Inconstancies, that  
commonly attend a Court One.*

**A** Few Lines will serve to name the Heads of the first Branch ; but a Volume will hardly serve, to contain the various Scenes of Inconstancy, that usually attends the latter. So that I shall need to write little of a *Pious, Contemplative Life* ; nor will I write much, on the *many Changes and Inconstancies, that do still follow a Court One.*

A *Pious Contemplative Man*, is one who gives himself to study the Law of God, and Nature ; and employs his Time, and makes it his Business, to recreate himself in Holy Contemplations, and constant Religious Reflections, on the wonderful Work of the Creation, and the merciful means of our Salvation : The one, Demonstrating God's admirable Power ; the other, his Infinite Mercy ; and both joyn in requiring our highest Praises, and greatest Thanks, to our Gracious God, the Maker of us, and giver of them ; and who being infinitely merciful, we can never exceed in our greatest-  
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Obedience, nor yet in our most sublime Praises.

A true Pious Philosophical Man, entertains and pleaseth himself in his own retir'd Contemplations; and like Holy *David*, he rejoices, and diverts himself in reading God's Laws, and keeping his Commandments; and will be still ready, not only to Fear his God, and Honour his King, but to Love his Neighbour, and serve his Country and Friends, even to the laying down his Life for it, and them, on a good Account; which is such a kind of Noble and Valorous Friendship, as ( I doubt ) many of the vain Courtiers will not be over-forward to engage in the Practical Part of it, being much more safe, and suitable to the Constitution of their Employment, and the Delicacy of their Life and Dress, to present a hundred Complements in the Court, than venture one of their Lives in the Field; since by it they run a double Danger; not only that of losing their Lives, but that of spoiling their fine Clothes; and therefore, they ought above all Men, to esteem it more Safe and Prudent, to leave the fighting Part, and the grinning Honour that often attends it, to the Mercenary Soldier, whose Manly Faces being us'd to Fatigue, are much fitter for it, and better able to endure it, and who are bound by their Trade, and for their Pay, to hazard their Lives; whereas, the spruce Courtiers, by their fine, nice, and safe Profession, need only expose their Complements, to please some by hearing of them, and prejudicing others, by relying on them: For Courtiers may well answer the Soldier, as the *Philosopher* did the Seaman, who being in a great Storm,



Storm, and shewing much Fear, one of the common Seamen came to him, and ask'd him, *If he was not asham'd, being a Philosopher, to be afraid of Drowning, when he was not?* To which the Philosopher gravely answer'd him, *That there was great difference between their two Losses, for you can only lose the Life of an ordinary Seaman, but I shall lose the Life of an extraordinary Philosopher.*

A Pious, Contemplative Man, never endures the great Danger, and common trouble of Idleness, because he dayly entertains, and diverts himself in Holy Contemplations; he considers the Momentary Flashes of all the Delights and Vanities here on Earth, and of the Blessed Comforts, and Eternity of Felicities, that the good Christian may expect, and will possess in Heaven.

And farther, a true considering Man will find, that his serious Meditations, and Reflections on the wise Counsels, high Mercies, and powerful Operations of the Almighty's wonderful Works; together with the Vanities a good Christian is bound to resist. The Temptations he is to mortify, and the Evil Inclinations he is to watch over and subdue, will afford him sufficient matter of Entertainment and Business, though he possess'd the Strength of an *Aias*, and could live the Age of a *Methusalem*.

Our most excellent Poet *Cowley*, whose Verses, like the Sun, must shine in great brightness to the Worlds end: And as none of the other Poets writ like him, so he lived like none of them; for they commonly so take up their time among their false Gods, as they allow

little to serve the only true One; but the famous *Cowley* made writing Verses his only Pastime, and living vertuously, his Business; for his Life was as truly Meritorious, as his Poetical Vein was highly Ingenious: In a word, I need say no more of this excellent Person, than that he liv'd as well as he writ.

This Poet said, *That the first grand Minister of State in a Kingdom, had not so much Business in publick, as a Contemplative Man has in private; for as the one has not the leisure to be alone, so the other has not time to be in Company: The one having but part of the Affairs of one Nation under his Consideration, the other, all the Works of God, and Nature, which sure, is able to find Employment enough, to prevent any want of it.*

To which I may well venture to add, though he's altogether unconcern'd in the Attendance, or Dependence of a Court Life, where we have common Complements, but little Reality; many false Appearances, and glittering Scenes, great Uncertainties, large Promises, and small Performances after long Attendance; besides, the Tempestuous tossing up and down, and hunting after the chief Favorite, or governing Faction, which Courtiers must still Court, Praise, and humbly Cringe to, and constantly wait on, and at least, seemingly admire; tho' it be often after no other manner, than the *Indians* offer Sacrifice to the Devil, that he may do them no harm.

O how happy then must a retir'd Contemplative Life be, that's free from the Crowds and Hurries, tedious Attendances, and vain Appendencies of a Court, which I look upon to be just like the *Popish Religion*, made up chiefly

ly of fine Ceremonies and Shew; Many Complements, and little Truth; where you may meet many Humble Servants, and hardly one true Friend: And no wonder Courtiers are not real Friends to others, when they have not time to be so to themselves, being still in a Crowd and Hurry, and so busily employ'd to be great Courtiers, as they have not leisure to be good Christians; being so taken up after Court Preferments, and in Court Attendency, as they have no time to spend in Holy Contemplations. Many Courtiers, (I think, I might have said, most) living so in this World, as if they had no Account to make in the next; and living so to others, as indeed they themselves forget they are to die.

And as these are Miseries, that most Courtiers are subject too, so there are others as great, which few Princes are free from; which are the venomous Tongues of Flatterers, who extol their Sovereigns, as perfect Masters of all those Heroick Vertues, which render a great Prince compleatly good, and perfectly great, though they have them not; but never name any of the Faults they have; and 'tis indeed such constant over-Praises, that benumbs (if I may so say) the Minds of many Princes, and blunts the Edge of their endeavours, after those Princely Vertues, they ought to know perfectly, and practise constantly; such over-Praises often blasting the Fruit of their own good Natural Inclinations, and sober Vertuous Intentions, and so increaseth the Punishment of their failings; because their Account must be the larger, and their Fault the greater, the more they are trusted, and the more they

they are able to do good, and do it not.

And truly, the destructive and common Infections of Flattery, cannot justly be appropriated, and limited to any one Court, since 'tis a general Infectious Distemper, spread over all Courts; (and that is the best, that has the least) to esteem most in Men, what is least valuable; and to value least what is most esteemable: I mean, much Riches, and high Titles, before great Vertue, and true Merit; and flattering Complements, before real Truth; which we ought not to wonder at among Courtiers, if we consider 'tis natural to us all, rather to delight in acting many Vices, than to be reprov'd for the using any one; and therefore we ought not to think it strange, that Princes do not like to be told, either of their beloved Vices, or natural Infirmities, it being a Language that is as uneasie, as 'tis unusual in great Kings Ears, and therefore seldom produceth other Fruit, than the sower sort of Dislike, if not Hatred; or at very best, great Surprize. For as light Mony agrees ill with true Scales, so Unhandsomness never likes the true Glass.

There goes an old Story, and perhaps 'tis but a meer Story, of that Excellent Princess Queen *Elizabeth*; whose Features of Her Face, not resembling the Perfections of Her Mind, Her Servants were very obligingly careful, that She might take Pleasure in seeing Herself, as well as all Her Subjects did delight in beholding Her. And to accomplish this their desire, the Ladies that serv'd Her Majesty, ordered false Looking-Glasses in all Places Her Majesty was to be in, or pass by, which so flat-

ter'd

ter'd Her, as She still look'd fair and fat:  
 And one Day at a great Entertainment, Her  
 Majesty passing through a Room, saw Her  
 Face in a true Glass, which sight was so strange,  
 as she started at it, in no small concern and  
 surprize; which a witty, nimble Courtier ob-  
 serving, and guessing the Cause, went imme-  
 diately and looked in the same Glass, and  
 seem'd so frighted at himself, as he presently  
 started back, and broke the Glass in pieces,  
 swearing, *It made him look like a Devil.* The  
 sight of this his Carriage, (as the old Story  
 says,) so satisfied the Queen, as She fancied  
 the Faults She saw in her Face, was the  
 Glasses, not Hers: The Application makes it  
 self.

But though the features of this Queen's Face  
 were not exactly Beautiful, Her Wisdom, and  
 great Policy in Governing, was highly Excel-  
 lent: Witness the long happy Peace, and plen-  
 tiful Times, *England* enjoy'd during all Her  
 Reign; Her true Goodness, and great Justice,  
 making Her beloved at Home, as well as Her  
 great Power, and known Policy, made Her  
 fear'd and respected Abroad. And really *En-  
 gland* could not enjoy a more blessed and pros-  
 perous Peace, under that excellent Protestant  
 Queen, than it did Trouble and Misery, under  
 our late King; who so over-strained his Power  
 to bring Popery into *England*, as by it, he cast  
 himself quite out of it, which he can only  
 justly blame himself for; since, had he kept  
 within his Laws, he might still have kept with-  
 in his Kingdoms: For I am sure, Queen *Eliza-  
 beth's* whole Reign was not more prosperous,  
 than the beginning of the late King *James's*

was calm and peaceable. For all know the Sun-  
 rising of his Government was all bright and  
 serene, without the least appearance of any  
 dark Cloud hanging over it; and those black  
 ones that appeared soon after, (I mean *Mon-*  
*mouth's* Rebellious Rabble, ( for I can give them  
 no better a Title ) that rose in Arms, to dis-  
 turb, or rather destroy our late King's Go-  
 vernment, which at that time was all calm and  
 quiet, he agreeing with his *Parliament*, and  
 they with him, as long as he kept his Oath,  
 and often-repeated Promises, of maintaining  
 both our Laws and Religion; and so we all  
 know how this rebellious Rabble was soon  
 Routed; meeting with an ill Success, answer-  
 able to their bad Cause, and a sad Punishment,  
 suitable to their foul Crime.

But Lord *Chief-Justice Jefferies*, that wicked  
 and Blood-thirsty Judge, pleas'd in acting  
 Cruelty, more than in doing Justice, much less  
 shewing Mercy; not considering, that 'tis the  
 vile Office of an Executioner to take away  
 Life, but the high Mark of Sovereignty to give  
 it; Cruelty being apt to act any Fault, Mercy  
 and Charity, to cover many. But *Jefferies* ex-  
 pected (I do not say, was promised) to be made  
 LordChancellour, if he shewed himself an active  
 Judge, in destroying all *Monmouth's* Party;  
 and he valuing a great Preferment, before a  
 good Conscience, so barbarously over-acted his  
 Part, in that bloody Tragedy of the *WEST*,  
 as if his Commission had been rather to Execute  
 all the Men of it, than only to judge the Re-  
 bels in it; for he put hundreds to Death, whom  
 the Law could never condemn; nor would he,  
 if they had had Money enough to buy their Lives;  
 for

for which many were saved, and for want of which, many were executed; a large Purse, making still with him, a good Cause; and where no Money was offer'd, no Mercy was to be shewn, nor Justice done: And yet this wicked Judge, though his Conscience was as deep loaden with the Guilt of innocent Blood, as his Sumpture was cram'd full with Bags of Bribery, had the Impudence to tell some of his Friends, (as I have heard,) who reproving him for cruelly acting against his Conscience, by putting so many innocent Men to Death; He answered them smiling, *That he neither then, or at any time in all his Life, ever acted against his Conscience; for his Interest was still his Conscience, and he still following his Interest, still followed his Conscience.*

Indeed if His late Majesty had been as careful in keeping the Laws, as he was severe in punishing *Monmouth's* Offenders, he needed not to have fled from the high Sovereignty of *England*, to stoop so low, as to be now a Pensioner to *France*; (where distressed Princes are relieved, more out of Vanity, than Charity, or true Bounty) the *French* King being so proud and haughty, as he scorns all below him, and hates all that pretend any Equality to him.

Indeed His late Majesty, at his first coming to the Crown, did by his large and frequent Promises, and high Reputation, of never having broke his Word, (the Policy and Wisdom, as well as Honour and Vertue of a great Prince) give his Protestant Subjects, some pleasing, but meer flashy hopes; who reflecting on the great sufferings, his late Majesty King *Charles* the II. had

had undergon, in his Banishment from the Crown, thought (being his Brother) he would have avoided for the future, all Relapses of that kind ; and have been highly satisfied by keeping the Laws, to have reaped the plentiful Harvest of Riches and Delights, that abound in *England*, above all Kingdoms in the World ; without repeating the sad Experiment, of living upon the Gleanings of the *French King's* Charity ; who to my own Knowledge, formerly used his Brother with no great Tenderness and Generosity ; though when he first came into his Dominions, he Treated him civilly ; yet not long after, he Banished him shamefully, at *Cromwells* Desire.

And truly, I never heard, that the *French King* has got more good Nature now, than he had then, or follows his Interest less at this time, than he did at that ; and therefore I expected, that the late King *James* in his flight thither, and his Queen, in her stay at *St. Germans*, will find but a cold sort of Entertainment, by a small, grudging, ill-paid Pension.

But I have stray'd long from my design'd Road, and shall therefore end these Interloping Discourses, and begin where I left ; that his late Majesty's Protestant Subjects, had kindled some small hopes at his first coming to the Crown, that they should have enjoy'd their Laws and Religion ; but the Reverend Counsellour, *Father Petre*, and his Jesuitical Herd, esteem'd that too great a Blessing for Protestant Hereticks to enjoy under a *Popish King* ; and therefore *Petre* and his cursed Crew, were busie in contriving, that as many of the *En-*



the English Laws, as were formerly writ in *French*, so many of the *French* Laws, should be now writ in *English*, and made the curreant Coin of *England*; that is, the King's Will, to be the Subjects Law; and so make passive Obedience to be, not only an Article of the Church of *England*'s Faith, but the constant exercise and Penance of their Religion.

To make our great, free, and high-born Nobility, to be but a kind of Servants to their Princes Will, and Commands; and the Gentry to be the like: And for our good rate of Farmers, who now do, (and I hope, ever will) wear strong warm Cloth, and good Shooes and Stockins, and Eat, Drink, and Lye well; to follow the *French* fashion of those of their sort, which is to wear only course Canvas Clothes, flesh-coloured Stockins, all wooden Shooes; to drink Water, and lie on Straw; from which kind of *French* Slavery, God preserve all our *English* Nation.

But our comfort is, That Man proposeth, but God disposeth: For, when the *Papists* had vilified the Church of *England* with the greatest Scorn, and threatned her with the most cruel Menaces they could think of; when many of our Bishops were sent Prisoners to the Tower, and all our Ministers commanded to read in their Churches, a vile Paper, to usher in Popery; and by doing, or not doing it, they were forced (in Effect) to this choice, either by Reading it, to offend their Conscience, or for not Reading it, to lose their Livings.

When

When our Universities were beginning to be filled with *Popish* Monks and Friars.

When our Corporations were turned up-side down, because they could not turn their Consciences so; and be for-taking off the *Test* and *Penal Laws*, which were quite against the Interest of our Church and Religion: And in one Corporation, a Foot-man was made an Alderman, and in others Aldermen us'd as Foot-men; when Places of Strength were all put into *Papists* Hands, (especially the Kingdom of *Ireland*) which by a fine-spun Jesuitical Policy, though a conquer'd Nation, is delivered up into the Hands of the Conquered;) and then how cruelly they use the *English* Protestants of that Kingdom, Thousands of the Nobility and Gentry can sadly witness, having chosen rather to live in scarcity in *England*, without their Estates, than in plenty in *Ireland*, on them; leaving their Habitations to save their Lives, for fear of a second *Irish Massacre*, which I hope, our now *Gracious Protestant KING* will by his Arms prevent, that the *English* Interest of that Kingdom may not be totally ruin'd; and indeed it was on the very Brink of being so, if *London-Derry* had not held out to a Miracle, and His Majesty sent them speedy Relief, and a noble Army to Conquer the Kingdom.

When his late Majesty gave free Liberty of Conscience to all Religions in *England*, (that is, he gave them all free Liberty to villifie the Church of *England* as much as they pleas'd;) and yet the Church of *England*, was not suffer'd to enjoy their Liberty, though Establish'd on her, by several Acts of Parliament; and

and Liberty of Conscience denied to all other Religions beside.

In a Word, When all our Government was thrown off the Hinges, and only *Papists* in Power and Favour, and the Protestant Religion just ready to be devour'd by Popery ; then our good and merciful God, beholding *England's* sad and deplorable Condition, was graciously pleas'd to inspire the Heart, and strengthen the Hands of the Illustrious Prince of *Orange*, ( our now Most Gracious KING ) to be *England's* Protestant Champion ; and to make Him the blessed Restorer of our Laws and Liberties, which was so great and generous an Action, as no Prince in the whole World, but himself, had Power to perform ; though never so much Will to undertake.

Which great and miraculous Action, as it has given all Protestants high cause to rejoyce, so ( I hope ) they will never want Hearts to be truly thankful to our King, being next under God, the glorious Instrument of *England's* Deliverance, from cruel Popery, and *French* Slavery.

And indeed, this Miracle of Mercy will appear much the greater, if we do but seriously reflect, What a great and numerous Army our late King had, to defend *England* ; and with what a small Force, the Prince of *Orange* came to invade it : Certainly, there's none that knows the great Courage, that still attends the brave *English* Nation, can doubt, that if the late King's Army, had been only to fight against a Foreign Force, and not against their own Consciences, by bringing in of Popery, ( for that was the only Product they could expect by  
Victory

Victory, against the Prince;) certainly, so great and splendid an Army, led on by their own King, could never have fled like a Mist before a Summers Sun, from a much less number of Men, not in Thirty Miles of them; but it pleased God, not to allow their Bodies to fight against their Souls, and so, rather to abandon their King, than forsake their Church; and sooner to lay aside their Allegiance, than quite lay by their Religion.

And as we read in Scripture, of the *Iron Gate* in the Prison, that opened of it self, in a most miraculous Manner, to let *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* out; so God was pleased in a wonderful manner, that the King's Army should all yield themselves, to let our Prince of *Orange* in, without giving the least Resistance; which shewed them to be an Army, rather of loving Friends, than fighting Enemies: For they made a strange, and never-heard-of sort of War, (a War, more than Civil) that a great, brave, and gallant Army, almost all *English*, who never knew what 'twas to run, but after their Enemies, should shamefully fly before the *Dutch*. But in real Truth, 'twas not for fear the Princes Army should destroy them, but for fear they should destroy the Princes Army; for a Victory against them, must have provid'd a Defeat to themselves; since by beating the *Dutch*, the *Popish* Enemies would have got the Advantage, to destroy both themselves, and their Protestant Friends, whom the Prince of *Orange* brought out of *Holland*, meerly to relieve the Protestants in *England*, from Popery and Slavery.

And

And therefore, surely all Protestants, ( especially *English* ) ought with all sincere acknowledging Hearts, as much as in them lies, to make suitable returns of constant Loyalty and Obedience, for the vast Obligations and Deliverances, we now owe to our Gracious King, for our Religion and Liberty.

And indeed, I cannot forbear mentioning the great and noble City of *London's* part, in their Reception of the King, which well deserves to be Recorded to their high Praise, and great Credit ; how generally, and generously they were all abounding in their Zealous Gratitude, and Hearty Acknowledgements to His now Majesty, for the Freedom and Benefits they enjoy'd under Him ; they relieving Him, not only with joyful Hearts, but open Purses ; offering to furnish His Majesty, with more Mony than he would take, and that too, with an Affectionate and Glorious Emulation, who should be forwardest in lending most, and sending in their Mony soonest.

In short, as our King has done all that's possible to merit *England's* Crown, so *England* has done all that's possible, to deserve their Kings Love ; *England*, making in Effect, the same Present now to King *William*, as it did formerly to Queen *Elizabeth*, ( of ever Blest Memory ) that She would please to take all Her Subjects Wealth for Her Exchequer, and all their Hearts, for Her Life-Guard, which is a much better, and greater Army, than the proud *French* King now has, or ever will have ; his Subjects Hearts, being a Present they will as little give to him, as he deserves of them : And ( I hope ) *England* will flourish, in  
as

as long and happy a Peace, under our King *William* and Queen *Mary*, as it ever did under *England's* beloved Queen *Elizabeth*.

And lastly, why may not *England* well expect, that having such a Warlike King, such an Experienc'd Captain, such a Strong Life-Guard, and such a Rich Exchequer, to assist Him, and a brave *English* Army (which may be as great as His Majesty pleaseth to make it) against the *French*, (the cruel Disturbers of *Christendom*) who the more terrible and powerful they are grown, the more fit they are for our King's Sword to humble, and to abate their Pride, (though he cannot assuage their Malice) by sending an *English* Army into *France*? In which War, all *England* will joyn as one Man, and crowd with an eager haste, which shall be most forward in that Service.

And I see no great reason to doubt, why that such a brave Zealous Army, composed of all *English*, may not be able to march over into *France*, (which is no new thing) and there to make the *Orange-Tree*, to shade, if not to wither the *Flower-de-luce*; and the *Principality of Orange*, to shake the Sovereignty of *France*, which, I wish, could be as easily effected, as I am sure, 'tis heartily desired.

But now 'tis more than time, to return my Discourse to the place I left, and to continue it on by saying, That such as desire to see all Vice, and vile Flatterers punished, as it ought, and all sorts of Vertues rewarded as they should be, must go to the Court of Heaven to meet them; for earthly Courts are no fit Gardens to gather the sweet Flowers of true Reality, but rather to find all the foul Weeds

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under  
of false Dissimulation, where obliging Promises are very often offer'd, but friendly Services seldom performed; unless it happens, that by a Courtiers serving you, he serves himself too; and then, rather than not do himself a Courtesie, he will do you one: For Self-interest is the *Generalissimo* of the Courtiers, and the Favorite Darling of the Court.

Truly in most Courts, Men are generally look'd upon by their Prince, not proportionably to the true Merit that's in them, but according to the good or bad Character, the favorite Courtier, or governing Party, gives their Prince of them: For 'tis indeed impossible, that great Kings can see all Mens Actions with their own Eyes, or hear all Mens Complaints, with their own Ears, but must use those of others; as great *Historians* are often forced to take the Observations of foreign Kingdoms, from others Relation, not their own Knowledge: And 'tis natural for Subjects, as well as Princes, to trust most, those they value most, and love best.

And as to Court Favorites, and their Friendship, they are generally so byass'd by Faction, and governed by Interest, and are still so busie to advance their own Concerns, as they have not Time, if Will, to serve their Friends: And at very best, a Courtiers Court Favour to his Friend, is as uncertain as his Princes is to him. And how certain that is, *Solomon* tells you, by saying, *Prov. 19. 12. A Princes Favour is as the Dew on the Grass.*

In short, all Princes and their Courts, are but like the World that contains them; a Scene of changes. And sure, since Man was  
C subject

subject to change in the State of Innocency, no wonder we should be all so, in this our Age of Vanity and Vice. And since the whole World is in a continual Motion, why should we expect any thing in it to be fix'd? For God, the maker of Heaven and Earth, as he planted Eternity in the first, so He sowed Mutability over all the latter: And therefore we ought not to think it strange, to see the Scenes to change so often, and vary so much in Courts; and to behold there, the Great brought low, and the Little rais'd high; to have a man one day a Favorite at Court, next day may be a Prisoner in the *Tower*: And all these Changes will not appear surprizing to a Contemplative Mind, since 'tis no wonder, that in Courts where Tempests are frequent, that Shipwrecks should be common.

'Tis indeed great Folly, to expect any place of certain rest, not only in the Court, but in this World, which is in a continual Flux: Yesterday made room for to Day, and to Day must make room for to Morrow: The Spring gives way to the Summer, the Summer to the Autumn, and the Autumn to the Winter. One Generation passeth away, and another cometh. In a word, we must still meet changes in this World, till we are changed out of it.

And therefore, as to my own late Changes in it, and great Uncertainty of it, the late King turn'd me out of my Commands in *Ireland*, because I was a Protestant: And his worthy Deputy, *Tyrconnel*, turned me out of my Estate there, because I would not be a Papist; without considering, that I spent most



of my Life, and sold part of my Estate in King *Charles* the Second's Service, and continued faithful in it, from the beginning of the Wars, to the end of His Majesty's Life.

Yet truly I did not at all wonder, that the late King *James* made me a Fellow-sufferer in those his Alterations in *Ireland*, and that I was disbanded in the Crowd of Protestant Officers in that Kingdom; though not all at the very same time, yet all on the very same Account, for being Protestants, and to make room for Papists.

And though to be put out of a Posture of serving my Country, was a Disappointment I could not but be sorry for; yet I was a little surprized at it, because I applyed my self to the Sovereign Balsam of Contemplation, which advised me to read the Parable in the Gospel, of the Lord of the *Vineyard*, who pay'd him as much that came at the Eleventh Hour, as those that endur'd the Heat and Brunt of the Day; and yet we read, that his Favour to the one, did not shew his Unjustice to the other: And sure the late King, had as much Power then, over the Officers of his Army, as the Lord had at that time over the Labourers of his Vineyard; and he might, if he had pleased, rewarded him as much, that came but at the Eleventh Hour into his Service, as he that endured all the Heat and Brunt of the *Irish War*. For though a King is bound to distribute equal Justice to all his Subjects, yet he is not oblig'd to bestow his Favours, and confide his Trusts equally on them all, but only on such whom he pleaseth; and so may oblige some with his Favours, without disobliging others by his

Unjustice: And therefore, such as Contem-  
plate as they ought, will do as I did; which  
was to consider, that though 'twas not in my  
Power to alter that King's Will, yet it ought  
to be still in my Power, to submit my Will to  
Gods.

All I shall add is, That if I had obeyed as  
zealously the first part of the Commandment,  
of *fearing my God*, as I did the latter, in truly  
and constantly *serving and honouring my King*; and  
could but spend the small Remnant of my Life,  
in as hearty Prayers to my Maker, as I have  
all that is past, in true Loyalty to my Sove-  
raign, I am sure I shall die a happy Christia-  
n, as well as I have ever lived a Loyal Sub-  
ject: For God never forsaketh them, that truly  
serve him.

But I have long stray'd from my subject, for  
which large Digression, I humbly beg pardon;  
but cannot yet finish this Discourse, till I as-  
sure the vain Complemental Courtier, That if  
he would be perswaded to abandon the Vani-  
ties of the Court, (I do not mean, the Em-  
ployment of serving the King,) for that's so  
great an Honour, as 'tis not only the Duty,  
but ought to be the Ambition of the very highest  
rank of Subjects: And therefore, (God forbid)  
that I should design in the least, to perswade  
Courtiers from serving their Prince; but from  
following the usual Vices that attend the  
Court; in making great Complements by  
speaking what they do not think, and promi-  
sing what they never mean to perform; but  
to be good Christians, as well as good Cour-  
tiers; that is, be zealous in serving their God,  
and that will make them faithful in serving  
their

their Prince, and teach them to desire rather to lead a Contemplative Life, than a Complemental One; and to abandon the Pride of Life, to embrace the great Vertue of true Humility, and to banish all meer Complemental Promises, to practise still real Performances, since many Courtiers Complements are but a Shadow without a Substance; and you will then plainly see their Folly, and repent your own, for having been govern'd by them, and trusted in them, and wasted so much time about them.

Then you will learn this good, and great Christian Lesson, That there can be no higher Happiness and Satisfaction in this Momentary Life, than in the Contemplations, and Preparations for an Eternal one in the Court of Heaven; where the pious Christian will enjoy an Eternity of real Felicity, without any Complement, and beyond all the Power of Wit, Malice or Envy, ever to invent the smallest Decay, or the least Deficiency; the Joys there, so much transcending all the Delights we can propose here, as they are all we can ever hereafter aspire to have: Joys, which as much surpass all worldly ones, (though all distill'd into meer Quintessence of Pleasures) as the most earthly Happiness, does the deluding Fancy of a Dream; or the pure Spiritual Felicities of the rational Soul, does the meer sensitive ones, of the Beasts that perish. But why do I go about striving to make Comparisons, where there can be none? The unspeakable Joys of Heaven, surmounting all possibility of any equal Comparison on Earth.

And now, I shall only add one Word to conclude all, which contains much in little; for I cannot say more, nor can you do better, than to follow it; which is, To make it the main business of your Life, strictly and constantly to imitate the Man after God's own Heart, holy *David*, who made keeping Commandments his Study and Delight; for then you'll be sure to make the exercise of Piety and Vertue, the Pastime and Employment of your Contemplative Life; and if you once come to practise that, you will of course credit this, That as pure Honesty maketh still the best Policy, (though the worst Courtier) so true Piety, ever teacheth the best Wisdom: For it will make us *wise unto Salvation*.

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## The Second

## DISCOURSE.

*Of the Strange Nature, great Variety,  
and general Plenty of Wit, that's now  
every where, in the Opinion of most.*

**W**IT is now become a kind of Riddle, being a thing all need, few have, and yet none want ; ( I mean, in their own thoughts. ) For as *Salomon* says, *A Fool is wise in his own Conceit* ; but 'tis not his own Conceit can make him either Wise, or Witty, though he may rest content, in the assurance he is both : For there's a vast difference, between the nature of Content and Wit ; for though all believe they have Wit, yet few possess it ; but for Content, all must possess it, that believe they have it.

Wit is now become so common in the Opinion of most, that like the Air, there's no place in Town and Country, that's not full of it, being as usual to our Ears, as Colours to our Sight ; which are so plentiful in all Places, as we can see nothing else in any. And though Wit may be much more pure and sharp in some places, than others, ( as the Air still is, ) yet like the Air, it so abounds

every where, that none complain of its Scarcity any where.

Wit is now in the World, like Jack-Pudding on the Stage; all that see him, knows him, whilst he knows few of all he sees: And yet, though Wit is a thing all believe they are well acquainted with, ( nay, most think, they are true Masters of, ) yet I am confident, 'twill puzzle the greatest pretenders, or indeed, the most real possessors of it, to give an entire and compleat Definement of it, and to draw a Picture, as can shew all its Features, and exact Dimensions; there being as many Degrees, differing Qualities, and various kinds of Wit, as there are ignorant Judges, false Interpreters, and partial Censurers of it: And indeed, most of these differ as much in their Opinions of Wit, as they do in the Features of their Faces, or in the Motions of their Love, and their sense of the Times; and therefore, ( I fancy ) I cannot compare Wit to any thing, better than Light; which, though it appears still clear to our sight, yet it still remains obscure to our Knowledge, of being able to give a compleat and perfect Definition of it.

Indeed, we cannot judge of hearing some Men brag of their Wit, but as we ought to do, of some Mens boasting of their Wealth, which is but by Uncertainty. For, if I see one that has much Money, though I can certainly say he is a money'd Man, yet I cannot certainly say, he is a rich Man, because I cannot truly tell, whether it be all his own, or not; since possibly it might have been, Money only left him in keeping, or he may have borrowed it, or taken it upon Interest, or come by it dishonestly,

dishonestly, and so foully enjoys, what he does not legally possess, as not being his own, but anothers right.

And it sometimes happens to be the like, as to Wit ; which may on some certain Subjects flow from ones Tongue, and yet not truly spring from his Brain, as being only the Effects of his good Memory of anothers Wit, and not the lawful Issue of his own ; and so he rather repeats Wit, than speaks it. For there's great robbing out of Books and Talk, as well as on the King's High-way.

For my own part, I do here freely confess my Ignorance, as to an ability, of being able to give a true and perfect Character of the thing called Wit ; and therefore I shall not pretend to teach you that, which I acknowledge, I do not understand my self, but must leave it to the long Studies, and great Learning of the *Philosophers* ; and when they can resolve me, I will satisfy you ; But truly I fancy, 'twill be as hard for them to tell by what Degrees and Measures, Wit works on all Mens minds in this World, as to tell by what Measures and Degrees, all Mens Souls will act in the next ; which I think, none will pretend fully to determine in this.

Therefore, my Design in this Discourse, is only to write a little in general, of such as pretend to a great share of talking and writing Wit ; who chiefly employ it, in giving a Description of the fickle Nature of the Times, and the subtle Intrigues, and Mode Diversifements of it ; with the various Changes, and inconstant Practices of our fine Ladies, and their young Gallants ; and how they can wittily

tilly Extol and Praise those they love, and railly and abuse those they do not; little valuing whether they give a true Character of them, their concern being more to write Wit on both, than Truth of either.

There is many a vain Man who desires Wit, only to get the vain Title of being one; whereas a wise sober Man, has so much true Wit, as not to covet that vain Title, since it may be purchased, when not merited; for 'tis but bribing two or three cryed-up Wits, of which there's still plenty (for Wit without Mony, is a Play will never be out of acting,) to Proclaim a Man one, and he will pass for a Wit among Strangers, though he is as meer a stranger to it as them; yet their crying him up one, will be enough to make him thought such, though he can neither write, nor speak himself one.

Thus the Election of Wits, is sometimes made like that of Burgesses of Parliament, who are often chosen, more by the Bulk of their Wealth, than the true size of their Wisdom, and by their large Quantity of Friends, than by their deserving Quality of Parts.

Mens Opinions in point of Wit, usually differing like their Judgments in matter of Religion, in which we all agree, that one Religion is better than another; but we cannot all agree, which is the very best: The *Protestants* think, they have just reason to believe theirs, better than the *Papists*, and the *Papists* fancy, they have good cause to believe theirs, better than the *Protestants*: And the like may be said of all Churches; and therefore, if you will hear every Church apart, they are every one the



very best; for every Church will tell you  
 and believes it too and so doubtless does  
 every Man in it, or else he is a great Fool to  
 be of it: And yet for all, if you take every  
 Church apart, they must be all in the wrong;  
 for every one will tell you, that every Church  
 besides his is so, which makes it a meer Para-  
 dox in Religion; for if you credit all, you  
 must in effect believe none, since each contra-  
 dicts the other.

So in the matter of Wit, all yield that one  
 is more than another, yet no one can convince  
 all, who has the superiority over every one,  
 and is crown'd the Wit-laurel by an indisputa-  
 ble Conquest. And the reason of it seems to  
 be very plain, because there are very few that  
 will believe, that anothers Wit surpasses his;  
 but this Man thinks he has as much Wit as that  
 Man, and that Man, as t'other, and so to the  
 end of the Chapter; for there's no Man, that  
 will allow himself to be so great a Fool, as to  
 think himself one, and that he is so very dull,  
 as to have no Wit, or Wisdom of any kind;  
 but one fancies, though he cannot write well,  
 yet he does not speak ill; a second sort, though  
 he can do neither well, yet he fancies, he is  
 able to give a wise judgment on both; and a  
 third, though he has no Wit himself, yet he  
 flatters his hopes, that by highly applauding  
 those that are Masters of much, to be esteem'd  
 himself owner of some: Others of the most  
 shallow and dull Rank, please themselves with the  
 vain thoughts, that they shall be esteem'd discreet  
 concealers of Wit, by smiling at that of others,  
 and saying nothing themselves. Thus we may  
 see, how this precious Jewel of Wit, is differ-  
 rently

rently valued by every Possessor, as well a Pretender to it; so that to get the Title of Wit, is not so great a triumphant Conquest, nor has it so much the Esteem and Admiration of sober Men, nor the Transcendency over all Men, as the Masters of it vainly imagine since, though much Wit is a thing few have, yet 'tis that, few think they want; and though 'tis common for Men to admire most, what they understand least, yet 'tis very rare, for any to value that much, which they think they need little.

Yet some Wits are so puffed up, with their imaginary great privilege by it, as they prefer the Title of a good Wit, before that of a good Christian, and had rather live high than well, scorning to confine their Wit to any one kind; but each of them will be an universal Wit, as *Socrates*, that would not confine his place of Birth to *Athens*, where he was born, but being ask'd of what Country he was, he said, of the *World*.

So many of these pretenders to Wit, are so confidently mistaken, and senselessly presumptuous, as not to be fully satisfied with the vain opinion, that one Man has more Wit than many others, that probably have more than him, though he fancies he has more than them all, and that he in a manner monopolizes all Wit to himself; and that his Wit, like the Sun, must shine alone, knowing that nothing can be extraordinary that has its like.

There are some of our great *Colossos* size Wits, ( I mean in their own Opinion, ) who like Men on great heights, think all under them, to be much less than really they are; being so vainly self-

self-conceited, that if their Tongue can run  
 not a little faster than anothers ; they fancy  
 their Wit does so too ; and they not only run  
 him down, but the other flies from him, just  
 as one, that goes down a River in a Boat ;  
 if you row never so little faster than the Stream,  
 the River will appear presently, as if it run  
 quite backward from you, only because you row  
 faster than the Stream runs.

Indeed, there are some vain-conceited Men,  
 who by rashly exposing their Wit, expose  
 themselves sadly by it ; their haggard Muse  
 flying to so high a Pitch, as neither themselves,  
 nor any else can well comprehend their mean-  
 ing. I am sure, such Wits have nothing else  
 to hope for, but that Men will say of their Wit,  
 what *Hudybras* said of Brevity ;

*That Brevity is always very good,  
 Whether it be, or be not understood.*

But this is most certain, that Learning to  
 Men, is as Manure to Ground, which by much  
 digging, and often soyling, it so mixes and  
 incorporates with the Earth, as in time, and  
 by use, it cannot fail of rendring it rich, tho'  
 never so barren before. So an ignorant Scho-  
 lar, by long Studies, good Masters, great  
 Reading, and constant Endeavours, may in  
 time become a learned Man ; yet there are still  
 great Degrees, and Superiorities in Scholar-  
 ship, because there are many sorts of Learning,  
 as well as there are divers kinds of Vertues, and  
 sorts of Wit.

But ( I think ) we ought not to judge by the  
 same Rules and Measures, as to quick Wit,  
 which is generally esteem'd to appear clearest  
 in Poetry ; for though Doctor *Buzby* is al-  
 lowed

lowed a great Scholar, and has sent many such to the Universities, for which he is very famous; though he has taught many of his Scholars to make thousands of true Verses; yet I never heard that himself or any of them, by their meer School-Learning, ever made any Verses so extraordinary, as to pass for very famous in the World.

And no wonder, that this Doctor the best of School-masters, should be no Excellent Poet, when *Cicero* the renown'd Prince of the Orators was not; some having a deep Understanding in the solid parts of Learning, and yet but a shallow Genius in the fanciful View of Poetry, and many speak well, who write ill, and others write well, who speak ill: I remember Mr. *Cowley* told me, when he was a little Boy at School under Doctor *Busby*, that he whipt him severely for stealing some Verses, which he himself had really made, which was surely upon this false account of reasoning; that because none of his Scholars in far more learned Forms, could make so good, that therefore *Cowley* could not, and so concluded he had stole them; the learned Doctor it seems not considering at that time, that though much Learning still makes a great Scholar, yet that alone can never make a good Poet, or a quick Wit; no more than the Vertues of a noble Mind, can make a beautiful Body, which is not the Work of Study, but the Gift of Nature.

Nor are there near so many good Wits, as great Scholars in these Kingdoms; nor do I believe there is so great a difference among the Wits, as they fancy among themselves, as if  
one

one Wit, could not come within a mile of the other ; when, I fancy, Wits as *Monsieur Montaigne*, says, do resemble Steps of Stairs ;  
 “ which though they be all higher and lower  
 “ than one another, yet the very highest Step  
 “ that mounts upon the Supporters of all the  
 “ rest, is but just as much above his next Step,  
 “ as the very lowermost is below his next.

Therefore if I might adventure to instruct these kinds of Wits, without being thought a Fool for my Pains ; I would advise them to consider, that it favours neither of good Wit, or true Wisdom, to fancy they cannot place a just Esteem on their own Wit ; without casting an Undervaluation on that of others, by way of magnifying their own, because they are not great Wits like them ; when 'tis their Duty to instruct their Ignorance, than to jeer at their Defects ; for great Wits ought to resemble great Kings, who are made such as well to defend, as govern those under them.

And I am sure, if they will hearken to the Apostle's Advice, which cannot be bad ; they are not to despise, but to prefer one another, in Honour and Love, and this is confirmed by the Prophets ; *Wo unto them that are wise in their own Sight, and prudent in their own Eyes ;* and *Solomon* seems to give the reason of it, by saying, *There is more hope of a Fool, than a Man that's over wise in his own Conceit,* which is also confirmed by the saying of a great Philosopher, *that a prudent Man is always sparing in commending himself, and backward in discommending others.*

And besides the Folly of Men's overvaluing their own Wit, there is really more danger in being

being cryed up for having very much Wit, if it be not moderated by the Rules of Vertue and Modesty, than there can be shame in having but a little; because many Men apply themselves to, and rely on great renowned Wits, and to learn their opinion of others, trust them with their own; what they think of this or that Man, and under what scandalous Characters they have set out such and such Persons of Quality; by which great Indiscretion, they venture not only incensing single Persons, but highly disobliging and provoking whole Families to be their utter Enemies for it.

When God knows, according to the wicked Temper of our Age, the least hasty provoking word, is presently so highly resented, as it raises Passion, and creates Revenge, and so destroys that Love and Charity, which as good Christians we owe to all, (though scarce pay to any.) Our Blessed *Saviour* commands us, *not only to forgive, but pray for our Enemies*; so that to shew Mercy is a Christian Duty, but to seek Revenge is a brutish Crime, only fit for the Beasts of the Forest, not the Disciples of the Holy Jesus.

I read a Story of a Protestant Prince, who had notice given him of a Gentleman, that us'd to wait on him often in his House, as his real Friend, and humble Servant, and yet at the very same time, was joyn'd in a Plot to murder him: The Prince hearing it, and meeting him, ask'd if he had ever done any thing to disoblige him; the Gentleman said never in the least, but rather the contrary; why then said the Prince are you so wicked, as to joyn in a design of murdering me? but that the Gentleman

gentleman denied with as great Confidence, as Falseness ; but the Prince discovering to him the whole Design, with the Time, Place and Manner, he was to have acted it, he found he could not longer disown his base treacherous Design.

The Prince then desir'd him to tell him, what could be his Inducements to it, since he own'd he had never done him the least Injury ; to which the Gentleman replied, he was put upon it on the Account 'twas fear'd he might prove an Enemy to the Religion he was of ; O said the Prince if that be your reason, I will shew you the great difference, between the Charity of my true Christian Religion, and the Cruelty of your false bloody one, You would take away my Life only out of jealousy that I may be your Enemy, and I now give you yours 'on the certainty that you are so. Therefore go and never more engage in such bloody barbarous Designs. This was such a noble kind of Carriage, that becomes not only every generous Prince, but every religious Christian.

And really 'tis just after this kind of manner we usually behave our selves to our Maker, we visit and wait upon him on Sundays in his House of Prayer, as if we were his true Servants, but we break his holy Commandments all the Week after, and combine together how we can most pleasantly break them, by murdering, or at least wounding his most sacred Name, by our blasphemous Oaths, as if we defied his Power, and needed not his Grace, and yet we can hope for, nay what's much more, depend on, just at the Hour of Death, Pardon for all the Sins of our Life, only for

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asking it, and upon no other account that I can fancy, but as this Prince did forgive his mortal Enemy, and design'd Murtherer, because he was his Enemy, that the King of Kings, will not be less merciful to his own Creatures, because they are his Enemies, and I'me sure their own for being his.

But we never consider, that whilst we are relying on so much undeserved Mercy from our God, we cannot pass by the least slighting word, or disrespectful Action, done to our selves; when if we had the least Grain of true Reason, or serious Consideration in our actions, we could not but confess, how irrational, and disingenuous we are, by such a manner of proceeding, since certainly a Fault committed against our fellow Creatures, can only torment for some time in this momentary Life, and so cannot in the least Degree equalize a Sin against God, which may torment us to an Eternity, after we are dead.

But I am sorry I must now say, that a Discourse I fear of Religion, does not at all suit with my Theme of Wit; the true Wit can appear in nothing so gloriously splendid, as in a zealous and constant Practice of Devotion, for that maketh wise to Salvation, which bare and single Wit never can; but since I am engaged in Wit's Company, I must not yet leave him, but return again to him.

There are a sort of vain pretending Wits, which fancy they make a great Noise and Busle in the World, when really 'tis but such a kind of simple mistaken one, as that we read of the Fly in the Fable, standing upon the Axle-tree of the Chariot, who said, what a Dust do I raise



as I go? And like the great Cham of *Tartary*, who fancies himself so exceedingly magnificent, and transcending all other Princes; that alſoon as he has dined, he orders his Trumpeters to ſound on the Top of high Hills, to give notice to all the petty Princes about him, that he has din'd, and that they may go to dinner; when they as little wait his Hours, as hear his Trumpets.

So theſe vain ſorts of Wits, when they write on a Subject, preſently believe they have writ all the Wit that can be on it, and have extracted all that's good and uſeful out of it, and great Cham like, they expect ſo much reſpect from the petty Wits, as not to begin, till they have done with it; and then they pleaſe themſelves with the fancy, that they have only left them bare Bones to pick, whiſt the other Wits that write after them on the very ſame Subject, think they have left what is moſt material untouch'd: So good an Opinion have they all of themſelves, and yet how ſmall a value have all for every one?

Really this excellent Commodity of Wit, (though one of the chiefſt Gifts of Nature,) is now fallen into the hands of ſo many broken Merchants, as to Piety and Vertue, that inſtead of uſing Wit as a choice Antidote to expel Vice, they employ it as a great enticing promoter to Sin, like a foul Stomach, that turns good Food to bad Nouriſhment, and would make Atheiſm a part of Wit: I am ſure if it makes any, it can only be the Devil's ſhare, who ſo envenoms Wit, as it poiſons ſome with great Pride, others with high profaneneſs, and more than a few, with Impudence and Fol-

ly, grounded upon the sinful Vanity of Self-Conceitedness.

'Tis most certain, that a small Stock of Wit, will serve to defray our travelling Expences in the Progress of our Affairs, in our meer worldly Concerns; yet 'tis very common for many that have much Wit themselves, to despise those that have but little; and those that have but little, to slight and scorn those that they think have none.

And indeed many of these self-conceited Wits, are so puffed up with feeding on the Wind of their own Pride, as they often swell into a Collick of extravagant Folly; since one may surfeit by overgorging himself with too much vain Wit, as well as starve into dull simplicity for want of a little that's necessary; for too much Wit has thrown some into dull Stupidity: *Festus* thought too much Learning made *St. Paul* mad; so that 'tis most certain there's danger in having too much Wit, as well as shame in having too little; a Mediocrity must be therefore best, since extreams are bad in both; and indeed 'tis so in all kinds whatsoever; for a Man may be uncivil, in shewing too much Civility, and troublesome in offering too much Courtesie.

I do not esteem him so great a Wit, that can write an ingenious Play, as he that leadeth a Religious Life, and still dealeth with his Neighbours, as he would they should deal with him, which is not barely human Wit, but true heavenly Wisdom; but many of our vain high flying VVits, instead of endeavouring the practice of such Christian Vertues, are busie in studying to please the Criticks of the Times,  
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by complementing them with high Roman-  
tick Praises, and finding them new Engines  
to advance their Love; Intrigues, better  
to divert the fine Ladies, and forward the  
Royal Society of Lovers, by inventing them  
new Stratagems, and learning them quick Ex-  
periments, in the great Art of well managing  
their Amours, by enlivening the fiery Inclina-  
tions, and enflaming the hot desires of their  
Mistresses in order to the gaining them, (that  
is, ruining them) who by their own natural  
Temper, and free frenchified Breeding, are  
apt enough to yield of themselves.

I have heard some of our vain young VVits,  
to gain the more easily their Mistresses Body,  
have endeavour'd to perswade them that they  
had no Souls (that they might act with them as  
if they had none,) by telling them that the  
Scripture mentions *Adams* sparing *Eve* some of  
his own Body, to make up hers; but it menti-  
ons not at all that he spared her any of his  
Soul to the furnishing her with one, but that  
remains still intirely in the Man. But as to this,  
God himself has pleas'd to declare that the VVo-  
man has a rational Soul, by saying *Eve* was  
guilty of Sin, and none but a rational Soul can  
be guilty of Sin; because none but a rational  
Soul can know God's VVill: Indeed this is  
both a sad, and strange way of arguing, that  
a VVomans having reason must be prov'd  
only by the bad Effects of her wanting it, I  
mean her having a rational Soul, by her com-  
mitting a Sin, which is altogether irrational.

And for the Stage VVits, they must be sure  
to quicken their Plays with a little wanton  
VVit, which like Stum to VVine, it makes it

much the brisker to the Palate, but much the worse to the Stomach; yet such Wit makes the Pit to laugh, and the Ladies to smile; and possibly without it, the Poet may be thought dull, and the Boxes found empty: And truly this has occasion'd some of the well-disposed Wits, to continue the Title of being Wits, to run against the Biass and Genius of their own Inclinations, and to act the Part, both of unwise and unwitty Men, by committing Vices in fashion, meerly to prevent the Scandal of being thought out of it, and to appear in the vicious Mode of the Times, to prevent being blotted out of the Catalogue of Wits, and Society of Popular Fame.

In short, he that designs to be a cried-up a Wit by all, must be a kind of Servant to every one, and to suit his Pen and Tongue, according to the temper of other mens minds, rather than his own: For if he does desire (as who does not) the great wages of general Praise, he must in a manner, enslave himself to every man of good Parts, and great Power; or else, probably they will not extol, but rather cry down his Wit, by the slighting Character they will give, both of it and him: And so I have done with these sorts of Wits, and wish that they had also done with these kinds of Follies.

But now, lest you may so far mistake me, as to think I blame the Wit of others, out of any vain proud Opinion of my own, as being better, and quicker, or more solid than theirs; I do here, both freely and truly make this real Confession, that I am in this Point, (and I wish to God, I were as much in all the rest)

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a perfect Disciple of St. Paul's Doctrin, 1 Cor. 8:2. *If any Man thinks he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know.* And Socrates, though no Christian, was yet so good a Philosopher, as to speak much to the same Effect, by saying, *All that I know, is, that I know nothing at all.*

I am sure, I can but too truly say, *that I know nothing*, except the knowledge of my own Ignorance, and want of Wit; and upon this account, I do heartily embrace Humility in her two principal Degrees of Tryal: The first, in having a very low and mean Opinion of my own Wit; and next, being fully satisfied, as holding it very just and reasonable, that all others should have so too.

And now, as I own I do not at all deserve any man's Praises, so I declare, I do not apprehend any man's Censure; for as a man on the Ground, need not fear falling lower, so I who profess to have no Wit, need not apprehend being raillied, or censur'd out of any; for my poor stock of Wit, may well be bound up in the small Volume, of acknowledging my great want of it, and disowning any right to it, unless you'll esteem Wit to be of the same nature of Sin, and so make my Confession of having no Wit, a Degree of having some; as a Confession of being sinful, is in some kind, a part of Holiness, since the first step to mount to remission of Sin, is still by Confession of Sin; so that very common Reason teacheth us this plain Logick, *That that must needs be part of a thing, without which the thing cannot be, and with it, may.*

And now, as I believe a Conclusion must needs be very pleasing to you; so I esteem, an Apology will now be very necessary from me; and because I know, that long excuses for the fault of Tedioufness and Dullness, (for they still go together, for all Writing that's dull, must be tedious, and all that's tedious must be dull) do but increase the Trouble, not lessen the Fault.

I shall therefore conclude in a word, that my sharp writing on others Wit, is but a true Discovery of my own want of it: These Discourses being so unwitty, and my fancy so dull, that I really believe, as I cannot Complement the vain Wits more, than to wish they did possess as much Wit, as they fancy they do, more than they really do; so I cannot oblige my self higher, than to wish my self as much Wit, as I am sure; all my Readers must judge I want.

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## The THIRD

## DISCOURSE,

*Considerations on the loss of my Estate in Ireland: With some Pious Reflections, on the Uncertainties and Disappointments, that commonly attend the Enjoyment of Land Estates, as well as all other Earthly Riches.*

I Fancy, the best way, now my Estate is taken from me, is to think of it, as I us'd to do, ( when I was young ) of my Mistress, after she had forsaken me, for another ; which was to remember of her, what I did not like, and forget what I did ; that is, I muster'd up in my Mind, all her Faults, and disbanded out of my Thoughts, all her Perfections : By thus Representing, and Picturing her to my Fancy, that as she was Young, Witty, and very Agreeable, so she was Coy, Peevish, and very Inconstant ; as she was extraordinary Handsom, so she was abominably Proud ; and as she had the Gift of speaking well, so she had the Fault of jeering much ; for as her Repartees were commonly very ingenious, so her Discourses were usually highly censorious. In a word, as she had much of an Angels Beauty in her Face,

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so she had much of the Devils Falseness in her Heart.

So instead of now remembring the Pleasures I did take in spending my Estate, when I had it, I will now, whilst 'tis lost, only think of the Disappointments I did meet, in my Enjoyment of it; by remembring, that my Tenants did often break in my Debt, and sometimes my Receivers did run away with my Rents; then I will call to Mind, that such a dry Year did burn up all my Grass; such a wet Year, drowned all my Corn; such a Year, a Murrain kill'd all my Cows; such a Year, a Rot destroy'd all my Sheep; and such a Year, a Blasting Wind smutted all my Wheat, and scorched up all my Fruit: And to add to all these Troubles, up starts a Vexatious Purse-proud Neighbour, and forces on me, the odious charge of a tedious Law-Suit; and after having spent much Time and Mony, and my Lawyers finding they had little more to say to me, or rather I to give to them, they advised me, to refer my difference to Friends, and so dealt with me, as many great Physitians do with their Patients, after they have drein'd their Purfes, by taking many Fees, and walted their Bodies, by giving them much Physick, (to little purpose) advise them to change the Air, more on the Account of saving their own Credit, than any hopes of restoring their Health. In a word, I consider, that the Rents of my Estate came in but half-yearly; but the Troubles that belong'd to it, came in almost daily.

And so 'tis as to other sorts of worldly Riches; though I must own, that Riches are  
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Courted and Ador'd, above all other Mistresses, and before all other things, since there's no Man of any Nation, that does not Praise, Love, Court, Seek, and eagerly and ambitiously pursue them; esteeming no Courtship too much, or Labor too great, to gain but some part of them; for all sorts of Riches are too much for any one, nor is there any one so greedy, as to covet all.

Wealth is not only the most admir'd and belov'd Mistress of the whole World, but indeed, the greatest Miracle now in it. For though Gold is the best part of Riches, as being the Standard, by which we value and measure all other Wealth by; yet this Gold it self, is Blind, Dumb, Deaf, and keeps naturally, but Dirty Company, as Earth and Clay, and is altogether of a yellow Complexion; yet notwithstanding all the fine Sparks, great Wits, and most fickle, volatile Lovers are fond of it, and keep constant company with it, courting it so eagerly and heartily, as to be ever highly pleas'd with it, and still discontented without it, it being universally so charming, taking, as it makes Love better, and gains Hearts sooner, than all others; for there's none but loves all degrees of Riches, though some do not fancy all sorts of Beauty, nor others relish all kinds of Wit.

Those that never had Riches, are still striving to gain them, and those that have them, are still fearful of losing them, and those that have most, think they have not enough. Enjoyment of all other Mistresses, quenches, or at least abates the most violent Love flames; but our fierce, eager Passion after Riches, is of such

Such an insatiable ravenous Nature, as it increases our Appetite by eating, and the more one has, the more one desires to have; like Fire, it still augments its devouring Fierceness, the greater Quantity of stuff it meets to feed on: In a word, Wealth to our Minds, is like Weights to a Clock, which is so far from slackning its Motion, as the more load you put on it, the faster it goes for it.

And though Wealth cannot move barely of it self, yet 'tis able to raise Multitudes that can; for it is the great universal Engine, that puts the whole World in Motion; I might have said, Combustion; she pulls down Enemies, and sets up Friends, and makes Friends of Enemies, and Enemies of Friends; it raises great Armies, and sets out strong Fleets, it forces away Kings, and takes Kingdom; it is an universal Pass, it goes where it will, and does what it pleaseth: For as *Solomon* says, *Money answers all things.*

But yet we are to consider, as Riches have these charming Allurements, and bewitching Enticements, so on the other hand, we are also to reflect, on their many sad and fickle Attendencies, which render them unworthy of our so extraordinary fondness of them, and our over-eager pursuit after them; since 'tis a very common experimented Truth, that the manner of enjoying Riches, is very volatile and uncertain, as being highly inconstant, and strangely humersom, satisfying few, but discontenting many; some gaining that do not deserve, and others that deserve, never gaining; so that in Truth, they are not worth so much our Pains to get, or our Fears to lose:

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in short, Riches are but like good Fortune at Gaming, which is still uncertain to meet, and uncertain to keep, and therefore, 'tis foolish to be fond, or to rely on them. But if you really desire to learn, what certainty still attends Riches, 'tis truly this, That they are only profitable to such as employ them ver-  
truously, and bestow them charitably.

My first Consideration on worldly Wealth, shall be this, that since I have lost my Estate in *Ireland*, I ought now to make it my great endeavour, and main concern, to buy me a much better Estate, and a far ~~farer~~ <sup>far</sup> Title, in a much richer Kingdom, that of Heaven; where I may make a most glorious Purchase without Mony, and enjoy it without Fear, or Danger of being turn'd out by that great *Irish Bassa Tyrconnel*, or his Rabble of plundering Teagues; for Heaven is as far above all their Thoughts, as Justice is beside all his Actions, or Wisdom distant from all his Government.

For indeed, considering the great and expeditious Policy he has us'd, to shuffle the several Interests of *Ireland* together, into one heap of Confusion; I might have said ruin; and in all probability, by it, run himself, and all his Country-men, to be Fellow-Sufferers in the great Vengeance, that now is fallen on the *Irish Nation*, for his and their abominable Cruelty, to the honest peaceable *English* of that Kingdom. For the work of Wickedness, still deserves the wages of Punishment; and Barbarity, is commonly attended by Destruction.

And truly, one may justly enough conclude, by his simple and comical management of Affairs, during his Reign in *Ireland*, that he  
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had taken all his Measures, and borrow'd all his Stratagems, from that famous States-man, Sir *Martin Mar-all*; for *Tyrconnel* has play'd his part in the Politicks to serve his King, just as Sir *Martin* did on the Lute, to Court his Mistress, without Head, or Tail, not knowing where to begin, or when to end; for he has put all *Ireland* in Arms, and thereby rais'd a Multitude of Men, rather than an Army of Soldiers, since he had no Pay for them; for 'tis a certain Maxim in War, that when a General cannot pay his Soldiers as he should, Soldiers will never obey their General as they ought; and such a disorderly Army, is more apt to Destroy a Kingdom, than Defend it, to Plunder, than Fight; and indeed they have already made such an advance in Plundering that Country, as they have rob'd and stript all the poor *English* in it, and forced all the Protestant Nobility and Gentry out of it, and such of the Commonalty, as were able to Transport themselves and Families, into *England* or *Wales*; as also, all the *English* Merchants, who either through want of Trade, or rather for fear of Danger, are fled, partly to save their Stock, and partly to secure their Lives; and 'twas they made all the Trade, and brought in all the Merchandizing Revenue, and Foreign Credit of Commerce into *Ireland*, which lies now waste, in a manner, both of Mony and Justice, (the two main Pillars, that Flow, Support, and Inrich a Kingdom;) I mean, as to the share either of the *Irish-English* that now live here in *England*, or the poor Protestants that yet remain in *Ireland*: For those that live here, can get no Rents out of it, and those

those that stay there, can get no Justice in it; or indeed, any Safety there, notwithstanding the Governours gave them fair Assurances, and large Protections, which afforded the poor *English* some vain Confidence, but no real Security, or certainty, except that, of being plundered of all they had.

And now, to conclude this Discourse of the sad Tragical Scene of poor *Ireland's* plundering Misery, and of *Tyrconnel's* Tyrannical Government; The truest and shortest Character I can give, both of him, and his Teagues, is, That he is only a Governour fit for such a People, and they a People, only fit for such a Governour.

And now I have done with my worthy Deputy, give me leave to stray a little longer from my Theme, and to glance my Discourse on his Master's Advances in *Ireland*, after his Landing at *Kin-sayl*; where he came in a *French* Fleet, with a *French* Army, with a *French* Heart, with *French* Instructions, and a *French* Ambassadour, ( I had almost said Governour ) to see and direct him, how to put them in Execution: I shall name but two or three of them.

The first, was to put all the Sea-Ports that lay convenient, and over-against *France*, into the *French* Hands, as the Ambassadour should direct.

The second, was to restore all the Abbies, and Church Lands of *Ireland*, to the *Irish* Popish Clergy.

The third, was to give at his first coming, fair Promises, and make large Assurances to the *English* Hereticks in *Ireland*, so as to draw them

them in, and make use of them as Scaffolds to mount to the Top of his Conquest, and then to use them but as Scaffolds, which when the Building is finished, are still cast away, and such of them as were so wise as not to be thus drawn in by him, to Dragoon and Imprison, and treat them a-la-mode de France.

In his way to *Dublin* he made some stay in *Cork*, where to follow the French King's Instructions, rather I fear than his own Inclinations, he sprinkled a little Holy Water of Compassion on the *Barndonians*, who deliver'd up their Town to Major General *Mac Carty*, upon assurance of having their Lives and Liberties, and their Town freed from Plunder; but the *Irish* Judges that came that Circuit, condemned them all as Traitors, those King *James* pardoned, or rather made good their Quarter.

From thence he went to *Dublin*, and afterwards made a Progress into the North, where he ordered that Pidgeon-House; as he was pleas'd to call it, *London-Derry*, to be taken in, *en passant*; but instead of meeting a Flight of Pidgeons, he encounter'd a Flock of Lions, who made a shift to destroy many Thousands of the *Irish* VVolves he sent to take that Town, under a French General, who lost his Life there, as well as his Army did their Honour; and for his Soldiers, he was in a little Time reduced to that necessity, as he knew no more how to get Mony for them, than how to take *London-Derry* with them. VVhich forced him to fly for Succor to the Magick Art, and much relied on Policy, of his dear Friends the Jesuits, to confer with him about some means to pay his

his Army, who hammer'd out this expedient of making Copper-money, to pass for current Coyn: Indeed I have often seen Kettle-Drums to lead on an Army, but I never heard before that Kettles paid an Army; which makes me think it a disputable question, whether 'twas by the Miracle of Transubstantiation, or the wonderful Vertue of the Philosophers Stone, that Metamorphos'd pieces of Copper into Jacobus's: but what Jesuits can Coyn in their Mint, is as uncertain, as 'tis most sure, that Jesuits sent into Protestant Kingdoms, are like Bombs shot into a besieged Town, whose Errand and Business, is only to fire and destroy.

And for the Parliament the late King *James* call'd at *Dublin*, I shall not name it, because it did nothing worth naming; except voting all the Abby and Church-Lands to be restored forthwith to the Irish Popish Clergy; which will be as little kept by them, as 'twas unjustly given to them; and so I have done with *Ireland*, and so I fancy has King *James* too, now our great General Duke *Schomberg* is landed there, who will not be so long conquering all *Ireland*, as the Irish were besieging *London-Derry* to no purpose: I am sure 'tis my hearty Prayer that it may be so, and my real Belief that 'twill be so.

Thus this Kingdom has performed but one of his three Designs, which he publicly declar'd, which was but to make a short stay in *Ireland*, then to go into *Scotland*, and at *Midsummer* last, to make his publick Entry into *England*; but alas his Romantick Fancy of making then a publick Entry into *England*, is now

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shrunke into real Endeavours to steal out of *Ireland*, into *France*, where his French Reception is like to be as very ill, as his English, Scotch, and Irish Success was very bad; and doubtless his Queen will receive him with as much Fury and Scorn, for being beaten out of *Ireland*, as she did at his retreating into *London*, before he fought at *Salisbury*.

But leaving this digression, that I may now return to my first Discourse relating to worldly Riches, I say again, that all we that have lost our Estates in *Ireland*, and consequently are thereby reduced to Poverty, ought above all other Christians to be more eager and zealous to fix our Minds on the Kingdom of Heaven, because 'tis the only place we can purchase without Gold or Silver: This inheritance is to be got by hearty Prayer and Devotion; which if we truly practise, God will certainly give us a far better and more lasting Freehold, than any Three *Irish* Estates, or all other worldly Wealth whatsoever; for the most Covetous Miser that ever was, leaves all his Money, Lands, Jewels, or other Goods behind him to others at his Death, upon this sad Account, that he can neither stay with them, nor carry them along with him. But 'twas never heard that any pious Christian did bequeath at his Death, either to his most dear Children or beloved Friends, his Vertues, so as to dispose and leave them behind as a Legacy to them, ( though he ought still to have lent them as a Copy and Pattern for them ) but still to carry those precious Jewels with him; God's Word declaring a Pious Man's good Deeds, ( are not to make their stay here, ) for they shall follow him



him being the only true heavenly Coyn, that will still pass currant in the other VVorld, and ever make us happy there in them, without any more wants or desires.

VVe read that *Socrates*, that great and valiant Philosopher, when he was condemn'd to die, to shew he as little fear'd Death as deserv'd it; as soon as he had taken leave of his Friends about him, he called for his Executioner, which was a Cup of Poyson, and drank it up with so little a concern, as if it had been a Draught rather to quench his Thirst, than destroy his Life. This Philosopher names two kinds of growing Rich; one the common worldly Road of increasing Mony and Lands, which being the great and constant Endeavour, continual Labour, and general Study of all Mankind, I need not much enlarge on it, and make that my Subject here, which all make their Concern every where: And therefore I shall only present you with a slight Idea of *Socrates* other Philosophical way of growing rich, which suits most properly to this my present Discourse; which is by lessening all Covetous Desires, and declining all eager pursuit after it, and enlisting only pious thoughts towards it; for this is a most certain Truth, That none enjoys Riches perfectly, that does not design them piously; And those that do not, Riches rather possess them, than they it.

Therefore my first Consideration shall be this, that Mony barely in it self, is but like meer Muck and Dung; which if kept up close, and heap'd together, will never make better than a stinking Dunghil, of no other use than to take up room, and raise stink all about it; but

if this Dunghil be spread abroad as it ought, at seasonable and fitting Times, it's able to help producing sweet Flowers, good Corn, and 'fine Grass, and so prove a publick Benefit: 'Tis just the same with the Miser's Coffers cramm'd with Riches, without a good intent of well employing them; it's but like a gross Body full stuff'd with ill foul Humours, which will certainly in time produce decay, ruin, and stink, if not cleansed and purified by Physick or Exercise, and a Vein opened by a good and liberal Charity; else those foul corrupt Humours will swell as a Dropsie, till it destroys its own Keeper.

Next 'tis worth our Consideration to observe, that a vertuous Person is richer, and more innobled in having but a little, when he is possessed with a free and charitable Mind to others, than he that has abundance of Wealth hoarded up for his own use only; since having plenty, happens often to be but the meer product of a Man's own laborious Scraping, if not Oppression; Or to be the Gifts of his good Fortune, or his Parents great Thrift, and liberal Legacies to him at Death, and not at all his own vertuous and just Acquirement; and thus, he that out of his little gives freely and heartily to the Poor, on the Pious Account of true Charity, demonstrates by it the Powerful Influence of the Divine Nature working in him; for 'tis the Noble Character of a good Christian to be still charitably dispos'd to give, and the sad mark of a Covetous Person, to be always greedy to keep; and therefore we may say of him by our Saviour's Authority, 'Tis a more blessed thing to give, than to receive.

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Another consideration why we ought not to fix our hearts on any Earthly Riches, is because *Solomon* tells us, they can make themselves VVings and fly away from us, or what's as bad, make us fly away from them; witness the many Protestants that have been forced to run from their Estates in *Ireland*, into *England*.

Next methinks, we ought not to place any great Esteem or Reverence on Earthly VVealth, because we often see it comes flourishing in to the VVicked and Covetous, and keeps far off from the Vertuous and Godly; for which there appears great light of Reason, because the Covetous are to be punished in their abundance, and the Vertuous are to be purified by their Sufferings, in the want of these things on Earth, that they may apply their Minds, and fix their Hearts on the Everlasting Riches of Heaven; for though VVealth is certainly God's Gift, yet 'tis uncertainly our Inheritance.

In short, if great Riches had not been only needless, but very interrupting in the Course of our Heavenly Progress; certainly our Blessed Saviour would never have advised the Rich Man to sell all he had and given it to the Poor, because of the impossibility of a Rich Mans entering into the Kingdom of Heaven; and therefore in my opinion the Philosopher said well, That a very poor Man wanted many things, but a very Covetous Man wanted all things; and indeed upon serious Consideration we shall find, that the want of Riches does not so much consist in having little, as desiring much.

History tells us of one *Epicurus*, that writ a Letter to his Friend *Idementas*, who was very rich, powerful, and bountiful, and recommended to him a debauch'd prodigal Friend of his to make him rich; but not in the same manner he had done many others, but in this sort, to oblige him, not by adding any thing to his Estate, but by abating something of his desires, and to bring him to present to God his Acknowledgments for what he had, without desiring more; for he whose Wealth consists in lessening his desires of it, and increasing to God his thanks for it, lodgeth his Riches in the blessed Region of a pure and sanctified Mind, and consequently like *Bias*, carries his Wealth still about him, and every where with him.

Then we should never forget the saying of the Apostle, *What hast thou, which thou hast not received?* he well knew, and so all that are Christians ought to know, that God is the only Author and Giver of all that ever was, now is, or that hereafter may be worthy in us, or dear unto us; and what Pleasures, or Comforts we enjoy, either in Soul or Body, we owe all to his Goodness and Mercy; and therefore doubtless, as God gives us freely the use of them, so we ought humbly and devoutly to return our Praise to him, and still to set before us the Pattern of good old *Jacob's* Gratitude, that would not mention his Wealth, though never so justly the Wages of his own industrious Labour, without still acknowledging it to be the Gift of God.

Not that I think *Jacob* did, or that any ought to esteem it at all unlawful, wisely and carefully to improve their Estates by all just  
and

and industrious means, such as may maintain their Families, and be of use to employ the idle, and relieve the poor, and to prevent the wants of both; for to provide for ones Family is a Duty, as well as a Vertue incumbent on us, both as we are Men and Christians; but the true means is, that we are not to neglect the Duties of Religion, to follow the Works of Profit; and not to be so fond of Riches, as to overset our hearts upon them, or waste too much of our Time about them, as we commonly do; making our selves such entire Slaves to follow our Gain, as we allow little or no time to serve our God: Now the fault of Riches, does not so much consist in our possessing it, as in its possessing us with these base sorts of Covetous Desires, such as are contrary to God's Word, and our Obedience to it, and 'tis to such that Riches is the Root of all Evil, and that *Solomon* tells us is a fore one, when the Owners keep Riches to their own destruction.

Indeed for matter of Wealth, as I never coveted abundance; so I hope I shall never be reduced to so much want, as to need a very little; but if I be, as God knows how soon I may ( for this is the most likely time that ever was, and I hope ever will be; ) I can truly say with *Job*, that *I never made Gold my hope, nor said to fine Gold thou art my Confidence*; and therefore I can the better answer want in the famous *Cowley's* own words, That I have learn'd the great Art of cheerful Poverty; and as the Apostle says, To be content with any Condition it pleaseth the great Disposer of all things to place me in; and indeed 'tis no small satisfaction

tion to me, that I do not find my self dejected, or cast down for the loss of my Estate in *Ireland*, because 'twas through no fault or miscarriage of my own that occasion'd it, but merely on the Publick Account of being a true English Protestant, ( a happiness I value far before any Irish Estate ; ) and as my fear is not much, so my concern is but little ; knowing that the Wheel of Fortune which turns now uppermost for the Papist in *Ireland*, may be for them soon lowermost again, and the English restor'd to their just Rights, and the Irish punished for their vile Cruelties, which God be praised, both are now in a fair way of being so.

And, I bless God, I was ever of so humble a Nature, as I never aspired higher than to such a middle Stature of Fortune, as to be still too high for Pity, and too low for Envy ; and ( I hope ) I shall always continue in such a calm State of Mind, as never to disturb it by wishing my self more, or offend my Conscience, by wishing my Neighbour less, nor be proud for what I have, nor troubled for what I have not : Since indeed 'tis every Christians chief Work, because 'tis every good Christians great Duty, whether he be rich by having much, or made poor by losing all, humbly to submit himself at all times, and in all Conditions to his Maker's Disposal ; for he knows better what is good for us, than we do for our selves : God sometimes forwarding us in our Designs, by putting some Stop to the violent motions of our too eager Endeavours after them, and so like a Rub to an overthrown Bowl, proves a help by hindring it.

And

And truly, if we can be so heavenly wise, as to submit our Will to God's in all things, we shall then be so wisely happy as to fix our Desires and Affections upon Heaven and Heavenly things, and to sanctifie them all by appropriating them to the Love and Service of God, which consists in keeping his Commandments, the true way of loving him, and the best way of loving our selves.

My next consideration is, that we may be fully assur'd, if we pay an humble and zealous Obedience to our Maker's Will, we shall by it, become more obliging to our selves, by becoming more Charitable to our distressed Brethren of *Ireland*, now ready to starve in *England*; where many pity their wants, but few relieve their great Necessities; though I am sure he wants a Charitable mind to himself, that has it not for others, and he is remiss in supplying his own wants, that is backward in relieving the Needs of others; for Charity is of the same Nature as Prayer, the presenting it to God for our Neighbour's good, is a certain doing good to our selves by it, since Charity is a part of God's Command to us, and so consequently of our Obedience to him.

My last Consideration is, that 'tis most certain, that a Righteous Life is most profitable, most agreeable, most satisfactory, and most suitable to this Warlike Age, being still accompanied with true Courage; for as *Solomon* says, *The Righteous are as bold as a Lyon, but the Wicked feyeth when no Man pursueth*; and besides I am sure, that as Piety is the best Guard of a Souldier, so Religion is the best Prop for a Statesman in the Government, being the most honest and advantageous

tagious Policy, as well for this World, as the next ; for Piety still produceth a good Conscience, which is a continual Feast, whether we enjoy our Estates, or not, whilst we are in this World, and when we are going out of it.

Let us therefore be so pious and wise, as to raise our Minds to this Holy Elevation of Spirit, so as to keep our thoughts still fixt on Heaven, and then we shall find them mounted above the Region of all worldly Concerns, and Troubles, either for the Loss of our Lands, or the Disappointment of Preferments, or the passionate Motions of our Anger, Love or Hatred, Hope or Fear, Sorrow or Revenge, and the like ; for our constant heavenly Contemplations will soon allay the Trouble of all our Concerns for all such worldly Things ; so as we shall remain in a perfect Calm of Repose, among all the Changes and Chances that we must needs encounter in the various Scenes, and diversity of Conditions, that happens while we live in this our Earthly Pilgrimage.

In a word, though Irish Estates have failed most, yet true Piety will never fail any, for God never forsaketh them that truly serve him ; and 'tis only Piety that can Crown us with Laurels of unspeakable Felicity in Heaven, the only place of solid Bliss and Comfort, where there will be no want of Estates ; No decay of Fortune or of Happiness ; no Pain or Troubles ; no Sickness or Vexation ; no Cares and Torments ; nothing to discompose or terrifie us ; for there are true Pleasures for ever, and Fulness of Joy at God's Right Hand for Evermore.



## The Fourth

## DISCOURSE,

*Of keeping a great publick Table, which is a troublesom Honour Elder Brothers of great Estates are subject to, and Younger Brothers for want of such Estates, are freed from.*

MY being a younger Brother, hinder'd me from ever experimenting the troublesom Honour of keeping a great publick Table; and as I never did, so the late King *James* resolves I never shall; no, not so much as a small one, or indeed any at all; for he finding he could by none of his Jesuitical Arts, and large Promises, work upon the Spirits of us the Protestants of *Ireland*, so as to turn any one into his Church, he therefore resolv'd to turn us all out of our Estates; and because he could make none of us *Roman* Converts, to make us all *Irish* Martyrs, (I mean, as to the loss of our Fortunes there,) which we all abandoned, choosing rather to leave them in the *Irish* Hands, than enslave our selves to the *Popish* Government, and the *French* Tyranny; who now hunt together in Couples, in that poor Kingdom.

But

But our great Comfort is , That the late King *James* is like to keep us as very a little time out of *Ireland*, as he is like to keep himself in it; and how very a little time that will be, our great and gallant General, Duke *Schomberg*, is in a fair way of soon resolving us, to our Comfort, and to the *Irish* and *French*'s ruin in that Kingdom, who are Twins in Cruelty, and Brethren in Iniquity, both so bad, as the Devil himself cannot tell which is the worse.

And though 'tis bad usage to take away our Estates, yet we ought to be the less displeas'd at King *James*'s using us ill, since he has us'd himself much worse, by following the Counsels of the *French*, and *Papists*; two Guides that have made a shift to lead him out of his three Kingdoms, and thereby treated him a thousand times worse, by their private friendly Advice, than he could us, by his publick disinheriting Severity; since all we Protestants of *Ireland* own, we cannot suffer so much by the loss of our *Irish* Estates, as the late King *James* has, by the Enjoyment of his *Papish* Religion.

And as to my share in the loss of my *Irish* Fortune, it has not been so bad with me, as with many of my Betters in *Ireland*; for my Estate, though 'tis of a very small size, yet 'tis of a mungrel sort, being part *English*, part *Irish*: So that it has only forced me to reduce my Table from six Dishes to three, and my Family, from thirty to fifteen; and indeed I am much pleas'd, that I do not find my Trouble ever the more, for my Table and Family being so much the less; for I consider, that *Solomon*'s Feast did not consist in a great Meal,  
but

but a good Conscience ; and that 'tis not eating much, but enough, that makes a wholesom Diet ; and I am sure, three Dishes are sufficient to satisfy a good healthful Stomach, though not perhaps enough to Feast a nice and curious Palate ; and by having less Meat, I find I have fewer Strangers to eat it, and consequently, need less Ceremony to entertain them, and fewer Questions to ask of them : For indeed, many of the coarse Home-spun Country Gentlemen, if you do not talk of Dogs and Horses to them, they will not, (I had almost said, cannot) talk of any thing else to you.

And besides all this, I find, that three Dishes of Meat, do not only satisfy my Stomach, and fill my Belly ; but they do also at the same time, fill my Mind with the thoughts of Elder Brothers, that have very great Estates, and are thereby in a manner, oblig'd by the Law of Custom, to the troublesome Honour of keeping great publick Tables ; and the World esteems them more happy for it, (but I the more miserable) they having great Estates of Inheritance to go to their Posterity, whilst their poor younger Brothers, have commonly but small Annuities, that end with their own Life.

And among the many Cares and Troubles that attend most Elder Brothers of great Estates, I esteem this customary Obligation of keeping great publick Tables, not to be one of the least, since they are in some sort bound to enlarge their Tables, proportionable as their Estate augments, and then the more Meat they have to eat, the more Company they

they will be sure to have to eat it: For (as *Solomon* says) When Goods increase, so are they increased that eat them; and what good is there to the Owners thereof, saving the beholding them with their Eyes?

Indeed, publick Tables are kept more for Strangers than themselves, who eat much more of it than they do; such great publick Tables, being like Ambassadors great Trains of Pages and Footmen, in their Gay Rich Liveries, which they make more for others sight, than their own need; and if this were all that could be objected against great publick Tables, 'twere not so very bad; but they are very often great Promoters of Excess and Gluttony; therefore, if all such Elder Brothers, were as wise as they are vain, and as charitable as they are rich, instead of spending their Mony in keeping such great Tables, they would employ their Wealth, upon some good and charitable Accounts; and in lieu of feasting the Rich, feed the Poor, and instead of courting the Powerful, to supply the Necessitous; and so employ their Mony, rather to keep Fasting out of their poor Neighbours Houses, than to keep such Feasting in their own, as if they did rather live to eat, than eat to live; using such Variety of *French-made* Dishes, as many of them are a *Riddle me, Riddle me, what's this?* And what's the greatest Riddle of all, Most of these great publick Table-keepers, are so foolishly vain, as to raise false *Ideas* in their Minds, so as to fancy the vain Glory, (for it cannot be the necessary use) of such publick Tables, ought to be esteem'd in their Keepers, not only as the  
Trophies

Trophies of a rich and plentiful Fortune, but of a noble and generous Mind; and all the while forget the true Character it really deserves, and all ought to give it; which is to make our Eating and Drinking, to be the sad Advertisements, and constant Memorandums of the Weakness and Frailties of our humane Natures, that cannot subsist without the daily use of them; and therefore, Feasting ought rather to trouble our Thoughts for our Natures Necessities, than to render us proud in the use of its Necessity, and make the Wants of our Body, the Pride of our Mind; when in real Truth, to have a great deal of Meat in ones Kitchen, is a much fitter Matter, for a Master of a Cooks Shop to boast of, than for a Noble Person to glory in.

There was a Report, That when the Queen Dowager came out of *Portugal* into *England*, some of her Servants seeing such great Plenty of Variety of Meats, not usual in their own Country, took the Courts ordinary Meals, for an extraordinary Feast, too great to last long; and therefore they lock'd up some of the Meat in their Trunks, which being discovered, some ask'd the reason, why they did so? Why, said they, *This will serve us to eat when this great Feasting is over, and we come again to our slender Portugal Diet.* Whether this Comical Story of the Queen's *Portugal* Servants, be true or not, I am not certain; but I am very sure, that this Tragical Account of the Almighty's punishing Rich *Dives*, fairing Deliciously every Day, is most certain, being a Truth which you may believe, from the Word of God Revealing it: And because *Dives* made his Belly his

his God in this World, God made Hell his Punishment in the next.

Now, as there is a sad sort of Belly-Gluttons, so there is a vile kind of Purse-Gluttons: The one thinks he can never Eat too much; the other, that he can never hoord up enough; for the more he has, the more still he desires to have, without ever reflecting on his own Abundance, or his poor Neighbours Wants; when truly, if the Rich did seriously consider, as they ought, they would find, 'tis the Duty of a good Christian, to take as much Satisfaction in relieving the Wants of the Poor, as in beholding the Glory of their own Wealth. 'Tis as true as strange, that there are some so covetous, as to want in the midst of their Abundance, by desiring even that they have: He that desires what he hath not, wants what he desires, but he that desires what he hath, wants much more; because he wants both what he hath, and what he has not: History tells us, of a charitable great Person, that would never Eat himself, till he saw the Poor at his Door first fed, saying, *They ought to Eat first, that needed Meat most.* But instead of our great Men imitating this good Example, many of them rather strive to gain the vain Character of a liberal House-keeper, than the blessed one, of a charitable Christian, which is so great a Folly, as well as Sin, as I cannot but wonder at them; and if they did but truly consider, they could not but wonder at themselves, since these great publick Table-keepers, can hardly eat, much less speak freely at their own Tables, without the unfavoury Sauce of Restraint; being commonly overlook'd by the sharp

sharp Eyes of others Observation, and often of their severe Censure, which sometimes makes their very Table a Snare to them; and therefore, in my Opinion, such publick Table-keepers, of all others, have reason to say with wise *Seneca*, *To be in much Company, is to be in much Danger.*

And in naming this, I only shake a few of the outward Chains of Slavery, that belong to publick Table-keepers; yet sure this will sufficiently confirm my saying of them, to be much like to what a *Philosopher* said of great Fortunes, *That a great Estate, is a great Servitude.* And truly, I speak not this as the mutinous Words of a younger Brother, that has not wherewithal to keep a great Table, but as my real Opinion of such Elder Brothers, as have the troublesom Honour of doing it: For (I thank God) though I have but little to keep me, yet I have enough to satisfy me, which is often more than much; since many that have much, think they have not enough: For as *Solomon* says, *He that loveth Silver, shall not be satisfied with Silver; nor he that loveth Abundance, with increase,* which is a great Vanity.

Nor can I yet so Complement younger Brothers, (though I am one my self,) as to have so slight and mean an Opinion of Elder Brothers, as a Writer gives in his Character of them, by saying, *Their great Estates gives them a Writ of Ease, as to all Industry.* And farther Adds, *That though Elder Brothers are the top of their Houses, yet they are usually like them, which are but empty Garrets, which seldom or never contain any thing of value in them; all the rich Furniture being still in the lower Rooms, meaning the younger Brothers.*

I know it cannot be denied, but that the younger Sons are generally more bred to Learning, than their elder Brothers; and indeed there is great reason for it, because they need it more; there being required a much greater Proportion of Wisdom, Learning and Industry, to get an Estate, than to keep one already got: But yet, though the elder Brothers are not generally so *School-learned*, as their younger, yet that does not hinder many of them from being Wise and Prudent, in the Opinion of sober Men, as well in the Management of publick Affairs, as of their own private Fortunes; and their Understanding may be as good, though their Learning is not so great as that of their younger Brothers, which is improv'd by good Scholarship: For as 'tis true, that any course ordinary Land, may by much Soyl and great Industry, be made good; so Experience also assures us, that 'tis no infallible Argument, that there can be no good Land without using both, since 'tis most certain, there is without needing either.

But my Design here, is not to speak of elder Brothers inward Learning, but only to glance my Discourse on the younger Brothers outward Freedom, in being exempt from keeping great publick Tables, on which account, they much excel their Elder; and may for all their large Estates, great Tables, clutter of Visitors, and number of Servants, tell their elder Brothers, what *Horace* told one of the great *Magnificos* of Rome, *That he lived a much easier and freer Life than he; for I can buy my own Meat in the Market, without being wondred at, and ride into the Country without being mis'd, when you can do neither.*

Besides,



Besides, most elder Brothers that succeed in plentiful Fortunes, (to instance but in one particular,) are often troubled to grant this Friends Request, or how to avoid that near, but poor Relations Importunity, in letting him such a Farm, or lessening another such a Rent, and so to fence against their Desires, as not to disgust the one, nor underfet the other; but to manage his Answers to them, with such equal Art and Skill, as to maintain his Relations kindness after their rate, and yet to set his Estate after his own, which must give Trouble, as well as need Industry. And after all this, when an elder Brother has hoarded up Mony answerable to his own Wish, and set his Estate suitable to his own Desire, he by the Course of Nature, and Rule of Providence, can enjoy his Wealth, no longer than he does his Life: For as *Solomon* says, *Who can bring a Man to see the Days that are after him?* And indeed, at the rate most elder Brothers are now-a-days concern'd for their Fathers Death, 'tis almost an even lay, that an Heir will be apter to thank God, for taking his Father out of the World, than he will be to thank his Father, for what he hath left him in it; and possibly, shovel that away by Gaming and Prodigality, which his Father was, by a long Care and painful Industry, raking together all his Life. In short, this is most certain, that if an elder Brother will set his Estate according to the best measures of improving it, he will hardly avoid the Complaints of his necessitous Relations, nor sometimes the Murmurs of his younger Brothers; and if the elder be as wise as they ought, they will never make War with

their younger Brothers, for they will still be, at least two to one against them.

But I will leave my Discourse of elder Brothers, to tell you a Story of two extraordinary charitable Friends; for of elder Brothers, there are many, (and some younger Brothers think, too many) but of true, real, charitable Friends, there are very few; they being grown as rare, as Complements are become common; and 'tis now adays, as very hard to meet the first, as 'tis foolish to depend on the latter.

I read a Story, (and considering the little true Friendship of our Age (one may well think it but a Story) of a worthy Gentleman, that was reduced to great Poverty, (a thing now very common among the Protestant Gentry of *Ireland*, who have lost their Estates to keep their Religion) but he had two Friends that were very Rich; This poor Gentleman had two Children, and little or nothing to maintain either; and he falling sick, left as a Legacy to one of his Friends, his Son, to see him nobly Educated, and as soon as he came of Age, to buy him some good Employment, most suitable and fitting for his Genius to undertake. And to his other Friend, he Bequeath'd his Daughter, desiring him to have her vertuously Bred, and to give her a good Portion, and see her well Married: And being told by some of his Friends, that they feared they would not like such chargeable Legacies; he assured them, that his two Friends were so highly Excellent, and truly Charitable, as he was very confident, they would take it for a great Obligation, his giving them a means to act such a noble part of generous Friendship,

Friendship, and well-placed Charity, which they perform'd very exactly, heartily and punctually in all Particulars. This Example of true Friendship, and great Charity, may be read by many, but I fear, will be imitated by very few ; because few consider as they ought, that none enjoys rightly and perfectly, the good of Riches himself, that is not still ready to employ it for the good of others, which is in Effect, for his own ; since he that gives his Charity freely to the Poor, receives as great an Advantage by so giving it, as they can profit by so receiving it.

The *Apostle* gives us these two grand Directions: The one is, *To shun Pride* ; the other, *Not to trust in uncertain Riches*. As for Riches, my being a younger Brother has hinder'd me from ever having had any to trust in : And for Pride, (I bless God) I had always a natural Aversion against it, and so truly detest it in all other Mens Actions, as (I hope) I shall never have a thought of practising it in my own.

*Solomon* says, *Pride goeth before Destruction* : I am sure, if my Destruction does not come before my Pride, I shall have time enough to consider the wicked Folly, and prevent the devilish Temptation of this common and raging Sin, which is so odious in the sight of our Maker ; as *Solomon* gives it the Precedency of all those seven Sins, God so hates and abominates, *Prov. 6. 1.* And truly, if we do but consider as we ought, we shall find, that the greatest cause of the Troubles of our Lives, springs from the Pride and Restlessness of our Minds, by envying what others possess, and not being content with what we our selves enjoy

enjoy; and so all our Felicities are defeated, merely for want of taking good and true Measures in the degrees of our Desires, as to all worldly Honours, Riches, great Table-keeping, and the like; which Men generally use, more to gratifie their sinful Excess, than to satisfy their real Necessity.

And truly 'tis the fault of most, if not of all of us, rather to wish the Alteration of things to our Desires, than to model our Desires to the things we wish, though this be in our Power to effect, and the other beyond our Ability to attain; and therefore, we ought to retrench all proud extravagant Desires, as much as 'tis possible, since the fewer of them we have in our Thoughts, the less of Troubles we shall have in our Minds, and be the easier and freer from Disturbances and Disappointments in our Lives; for 'tis the number of our vain unreasonable Desires, that raises the multitude of our extravagant Wishes for them, and over-eager endeavours after them, and gives such Troubles and Disturbances in our failments of them; in often attempting things, we cannot have so much as a Possibility of obtaining; such is our restless Nature, that though we obtain the Conquest of most of our Desires, yet that's not sufficient to compleat our Content, since the Disappointment of any of them intermixed, gives a disrelish to all our other Enjoyments; Motions of our Minds, being become by the false Measures of Pride, Vanity, and Inconsideration, like the temper of our Bodies; the Disorder of any one part, casts a painful Trouble on all the rest: And really, if we do but truly consider

as we ought, we shall find, that much Riches, great Honours, high Employments, and the like, are to such as attain them, but of the same Nature of old Age, which affords much more Satisfaction in the time 'tis getting, than in the thing it self, when 'tis got, in our Advancements towards them, than in our Enjoyment of them; they are all but a kind of Hare-hunting Sport, which only consists in running after the Game, and ends with the taking of it.

Therefore, the only Medicine to cure our Itch after worldly Places and Preferments, is, for us at all times, and in all conditions, and indeed, in every thing, to submit our Will to God's, who better knows what's good for us, and satisfactory to us, than we do our selves; and if we can grow but so Heavenly Wise, we shall certainly become so Temporarily happy, as to fix our Affections, and mount our Desires, aim all our Actions, and sanctifie all our Love, in appropriating it to the love of God, and the keeping his Commandments, (of which keeping a great publick Table is none) the only true effect of our loving him, and indeed, of loving our selves too.

I shall conclude this Discourse, with this Consideration, which may be useful to such as live in Court, Town, or Country, or to such rich elder Brothers, as will not be contented without keeping a great publick Table; or to those younger Brothers, as are well satisfied with a small one; that as [an over-eager and fierce Pursuit after what is not absolutely necessary, is rather the Issue of a vain Ambition,

bition, than the mark of a sound Judgment. So proud and hungry Desires after keeping a great Table of much Meat, are not the true Symptoms of a good Stomach, but the ill Effects of a bad Disease: Since 'tis the very same with Meat, as 'tis with Riches, which does not consist in having much, but enough; This being a most certain Maxim, *That no Man can be Poor, that has enough; nor no Man can be Rich, that desires more than he has, or Wise, that covets more than he needs.*

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The

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## The FIFTH

## DISCOURSE,

*Of Drinking to Excess, which is a foul Crime in any Man, but in a Minister above all Men; and therefore 'tis the Duty of Bishops, to use great Care to prevent, and strict Power to punish such Offenders.*

I Have that devout Reverence, high Esteem, and hearty Kindness for the Clergy of the Church of England, which I had always, and by the Blessing of God, ever will have; neither can I write my Opinion of some of them, without highly forcing my Nature, and truly troubling my Mind; since I have too much reason to fear, that all the Clergy do not lead such strict Lives as they ought, and I heartily wish they did; but cannot expect they should, till they are chosen and ordained Ministers, principally for their good Inclinations and true Zeal for Piety and Vertue, and their hopeful Advances in the Practice of a Holy Life; and not barely for their much Learning, and long living in an University; since 'tis most certain, that many Scholars that have natural Aptness, and a sprightly Genius for Learning,  
have

have but dull Thoughts, and averſe Inclinations to Piety and Vertue; many having a great deal of Wit flowing from their Tongues, who have but a very little Fear of God before their Eyes.

And therefore, to Purifie and Reſtore the Eccleſiaſtick Order to its Primitive Beauty and Innocency, is ſo far from the Work of a little Time, or an ordinary Means, as I fancy, nothing leſs than a Miraculous one can Effect it, conſidering what a Crowd of young Beardleſs Clergy, are ſcattered about His Majeſty's Dominions, many of them being more known by their Canonical Habit than Miniſterial Deportment; ſome being in the prime of their Youth, and others of them, in the full ſtrength of their Wildneſs; for the ſtate of Grace, does not always keep pace with the ſtate of Life; for though Twenty one is a ſufficient ripeneſs of Years, to manage a great Eſtate, yet it often falls ſhort of a ſufficient Maturity of Age, to make a good and conſtant able Preacher.

For, Years advance with the ſame pace in a Man, as well when he ſleeps, as wakes; and at the like Rate, when he conſumes his Time in Senſual Pleaſure, as when he ſpends it in Heavenly Contemplation: But the noble and improvable parts of the Mind, act after a quite differing manner; for theſe, like the beginnings of Nature, are at firſt weak and imperfect, Strength and Perfection comes on by Degrees.

So Learning is not to be purchaſed by Whole-sale, nor to be maintained by Idleneſs, but is only acquired by conſtant Study, great Diligence,



Diligence, and by an Active Industry. Learning in Men moves like a Boat against the Stream, if it be not constantly shoved forward, it will certainly run backward, and soon lose what it formerly gain'd.

And so indeed, many an University-man who has past his Degrees of Master of Arts, before he left the Colledg, when he returns home to his Friends in the Country, soon becomes another Master of Art, in the Science of Hawking, Hunting and Drinking; with such other Cardinal Vertues, and noble Country Pastimes, as are the immediate Growth of the Place he lives in, and the Exercises of the Companions he associates with, and hopes his Friends will not forget he is an University-Man, tho' he himself does; which occasion'd an ingenious Writer to say, *That he thought it more a Shame, than a Sin, to declare he believ'd 'twould cost God less to raise to Life all the old Clergy-Saints that died in former Ages, than to make all the young Ministers Saints, that live in this.*

But as 'tis too true, that there are some few idle, debauch Clergy-Men, so 'tis most certain, there are many Vertuous Pious Ministers; and therefore, he is both an ill Logician, and a bad Christian, that will attempt drawing these Consequences, of endeavouring to discourage good Ministers from exercising the Pious Duties of their Holy Calling, because some bad ones are neglectful in the Performance of theirs.

We read, that the very best Society of Men that ever was, or will be in the World, had a *Judas* among them; and *David*, that was bless'd with the Title of being a Man after God's

God's own Heart, was as Man, guilty of great Failings; and wise *Solomon* quitted the true God, to adore the Idols of strange Women: Men can make no other Apology in this World for Sins, than only to Plead, that they are Men, and so cannot surpass all that's Natural; the very brightest of all Created Things, the Sun, has its Eccipses; and though some few of our Ecclesiastick Order may prove Debauch'd, and others Unlearned, yet certainly God does still preserve many, and many good devout Persons among them, who by the good Example of a Holy Life and Conversation, do now carry the true Image of that great Vertue and Piety, which appeared at the Birth of Christianity, in the Holy Persons of the Primitive Times.

And therefore 'tis a Satisfaction, that though all our Clergy are not so good as they ought, ( and I wish they all were ) yet they are not so debauch'd, as many fancy they are, and strive to make others believe they be, by rendring them by their Discourses, as bad as they would have them to be; for several, because they have no Religion themselves, and others, because they are not of their Church, so hate the Order of our Ministry, as they are so far from paying any respect to their Persons, as they attempt, not only to cast shame as much as they can on their Office, but as much as they dare on the Gospel, upon their Account.

But that is all so made up with Purity and Truth, as it will not allow the least shadow of a Scruple, to approach the Lustre of its pure Divine Equity; and all those false Atheistical

istical Tongues, that dare attempt to blaspheme Christ's Holy Gospel, (of which there are too many,) their Speech is but just like the noisom Vapor, that rises out of a nasty stinking Dunghil, which plainly shews the foul Corruption of the place it comes from, but cannot at all infect the glorious Brightness of the Sun that does Evaporate it.

I hope in this my Discourse, Ministers will find my Design to be neither over-searching, nor too severe; but for those few who lead debauch'd Lives, I must still own, I have too great an esteem for their Office, to have any Complacency for their Faults, and must write of them at so true and impartial a Rate, as rather to hazard the loss of their Kindness to me, than decline the real Effects of mine to them: I am sure, I shall give no just Cause of Complaint to the Vertuous Clergy, by naming some Faults of those that are not so, since by telling those Vices the bad Clergy are infected with, I do but repeat the Honours due to the Pious, who are free from those Crimes. And for such lewd Clergy-Men, as are infected with this Vile Scandalous Sin of Drunkenness, which is the only one I shall here insist on, and exclaim against; methinks the bare naming of it, should be a sufficient Argument of Reproof; for Drunkenness is of such a horrid Nature, as 'tis not only a Sin to commit, but a Scandal to repeat; Nature her self having marked it with a Figure of Horror, as since many that are not asham'd to act that Sin in private, yet cannot but blush, when they are told in publick that they do it.

And

And this is in a manner, all I design to point at; for I shall ever take a Satisfaction, in endeavouring to moderate the Clergies Faults, but shall detest the least Thought of multiplying their Vices; but yet, I cannot tell how to bestow my Praises, after the common rate some Men usually give to some of them, which are generally so biassed, if not governed by Fancy, Affection, or Interest, as most praise them, suitable to the Love and Concern they have for them, rather than the true Vertue and Merit that's in them.

I am sure, I heartily Love and Esteem all the Clergy-Men that are good, and am truly sorry for those that are not so; but though I love the Vertuous Clergy very much, and have an eager desire to express it in all kinds of Service, yet I know my own Ignorance so very well, that I cannot have the least pretending Thought to be their Champion, by Writing; since in that vain Essay, I should be so far from meriting Thanks from them, or gaining Applause to my self, that I should but discover my own Folly, and not deserve their Esteem.

For I own I am no Scholar, which is now my great Trouble, (and what's worse as to the Reader, will be his Trouble too,) before he has half look'd this over; and therefore, since I am so unhappy as to be no Scholar, I will not be so impudent, as to try the Experiment of making Brick without Straw, nor pretend to be Master of a Trade, I was never an Apprentice to, and think to write learnedly without any Learning.

But

But though I want the Skill to mend my Watch when 'tis out of order, yet that does not hinder me from knowing when 'tis so: And so after this manner I am with the Clergy, I cannot avoid seeing the Faults of some, though I pretend not an Ability to rectifie the Errors of any; and cannot but take notice, that all our Clergy are not such strict Livers as they ought, nor so highly Learned as they should be; for, though to judge right of Learning, is a Faculty that belongs only to a learned Understanding, which I pretend not to; yet to behold a Minister drunk, is but an act of Sight; and though I cannot argue well, yet I thank God, I can see truly.

But on the other Hand, I cannot in the least approve such as screw up, and raise the Failings of some Clergy, to a height that surpasses all Moderation, and indeed Justice, by endeavouring to make the over-flowing Excess of Drinking in some few of the Clergy, to be an entire Deluge of Drunkenness, over the whole Body of the Ministry.

I know that Drunkenness is a very foul and scandalous Sin in any Man, and in a Minister above all Men; but yet it cannot possibly be of so bad a Nature as the Sin of *Eve*, which was sufficient to draw a Forfeiture of the State of Innocency on her whole kind; infusing it self like a Leprosie over all her Posterity, as the *Egyptian* Plague, that left none uninfected.

I never had such an extravagant Thought, nor ( I hope ) none has, that our Universities have the wonderful Art of making Scholars only for being bred there; as *Spain* has the powerful knack of making Gentlemen, meerly for  
being

being born there. I know all are not Scholars that are bred in Universities, (and so do too many that have had their Children there;) nor is a vertuous Life inseparable from Ministers, for some Preach well, and yet Live ill; their Sermons are Holy, but their Lives are not so; yet surely, no Man that is indued with common Reason, can be so very senseless, as to conclude the Church of *England's* Religion to be bad, because some few of its Ministers Lives are not good; Vice may shelter it self under a Canonical Dress, as well as any other: How common is it, to see dirty Streams to flow from the clearest Springs? And who dare declare himself Fool enough, to be so totally Disinherited from the meanest Portion of Reason, as to say, *The Suns Motion is the less Regular and true, because many Sun-Dials point their Hours false, when the Sun's light is still one and the same, though the same Colours by their Reflexes are many and changeable?* God forbid, that the Faults of some of our Clergy-Men, should reflect on the whole Order of the Ministry, and much more, on the Truth of the Church and Gospel; for a few debauch'd Parsons, can no more diminish the number of the Holy Catholick Church, than the Corruption of a few individual Substances, can subtract from the Matter of the whole Universe.

And pray tell me, if you can, what Society of Men, (nay, I will say more,) what Degrees and Kinds of Employments are there in the World, that have not their proportionable shares in Sins; in some, suitable to their Powers to act; and in others, according to their wicked Desires to covet? I say covet, since a  
wicked

wicked-minded Man may sin with a veruons Woman, though he never enjoys her, meerly for desiring it; for the Lust of the Eye, is the Adultery of the Heart.

Sure, he that will give himself time to consider, (as I fancy, few do,) will soon find reason to believe, that the Adultery of the Body cannot be more sinful, than this of the Mind is foolish, being not only a dear, but simple way of purchasing Damnation, to embrace the Crime, but not the Woman, to undergo the Punishment of the Sin, without enjoying the Pleasure of the Wish; and for only a flash of wicked lustful Desires, to venture deserving those of Everlasting Burning.

But my Design is, not to launch into Discourses of ~~this~~ Nature, but only to mind you, that Debauchery is not more (nay, God forbid it should be so much) intail'd on our Clergy, and their Pious Calling, as on all other sorts of Offices, and Degrees of Men; for indeed, 'tis not only the Nature of Clergy-Men, but the Nature of Mankind, to be corrupt and sinful, we being all conceiv'd in Sin; and the very best in the World, are not free from the Dregs of the Infection: St. Paul said, St. Peter himself was blame-worthy, and therefore not infallible; and yet his worthy Successor the Pope, is infallible, if you'll believe the *Papists*, which I am sure I do not.

'Tis certain, that some have less Faults than others; and 'tis as certain, that none are without some: He is the best Man that has fewest, but he is more than Man, that has none; so that we may both easily and safely conclude, that there can be no Minister so Pious and

Vertuous, as to be perfect in this World; and therefore, I fancy, I may safely say of the very best of Clergy-Men, what a Writer said of the Pomegranate, *That though it be never so fair and outwardly sound, to the most curious and discerning Eye; yet to have it without one rotten Kernel, was never yet seen, nor will be ever hereafter met with, till it grows in Paradise, and we can get there to behold it.*

I confess, I have heard (and I hope, 'tis but hear-say) of a Clergy-Man, who was so highly profane in his drinking Jollity, as to declare, That though he read every Sunday to his Parishioners, a Sermon to lead a strict Pious Life, for a hundred Pounds a Year; yet he would not be bound to a strict constant Observance of it himself for a Thousand: A strange Prodigy of Profaneness, unfit for any good Christian to hear, but most wicked for any Minister to say; for surely, as such a profane scandalous Clergy-Man, is odious in his Life, so his Bishop is unfortunate, if not blameable in his Choice, in giving the care of others Souls to him, who minds not his own.

'Tis an Observation among great Politicians, in the Regulating State Affairs, that a Prince's Favour, or a Man's own good Fortune, may advance him in the beginning to high Employments, and thereby to great Renown in the World; but it must be his true Wisdom, high Abilities, and good civil Deportment, that must carry him on, and bring him off, so as to perform his Office with Success and Esteem.

And now, the like may be said of a Minister, that his Bishops Favour, and his good Fortune (to be of Kin to him) may advance him



him to the rich Livings, and great Dignities in the Church; yet for all, it must be his great Learning, exemplary Piety, active Charity, and constant Humility, that must Recommend him to, and Preserve him in Esteem among all religious and sober Persons; and if he proves defective in them, he may thrive in the Wealth of his Livings; but he will ever want the Esteem and Praise of all sober and vertuous Persons of his Parish and Neighbourhood, who will never value him the more, for his rich Livings, (nor his Bishop the better, for so ill disposing them;) since in a great Measure, such a Ministers Faults, are but the Effects of such a Bishops Neglect.

A Bishop in his Diocess, ought to be like the Pilot in a Ship, whose Office is to give Motion to all other Officers in the Vessel; and so, as a Bishop in Dignity, is greater than all his Clergy, so he ought in Learning, and Spirit of Government, to be superiour to them all; and not only to know what his Clergy ought to do, but to make them do what they ought.

Indeed, I did know one Bishop, (and but one,) who took no notice (at least, in any publick Censure) of a Clergy-Man in his Diocess, who by often drinking to Excess, made a wicked and scandalous Invasion, on the Pious Life, which a Minister of the Gospel ought to lead; and at the same time, did silence another of his Clergy, for making but a slight Incursion on the Out-bounds of his Lordships Priviledge and Authority; which minds me of a pretty extravagant Law among the *Turks*, *That he that speaks but a word*

*against Mahomet is to suffer immediate Death, but there's no such Law made, or Punishment us'd for speaking against God himself, for which the Turks give this reason, That Mahomet is to revenge his own Affronts when he can, but the great God may do it when he will.*

But though 'tis true, that God can revenge his own Affronts when he will, yet we are not to revenge our own Affronts when we can, nor at all though we could; yet publick Ministers of Justice, are to punish others Faults, or else they'l make them in a manner their own, since delaying Justice is a kind of refusing it.

I am sure, in the Discipline of War, I have seen a poor Soldier hang'd on a March for but stealing a Lamb, (though perhaps urg'd to it through meer Hunger,) for good Example sake to terrifie others, from doing the like, whilst some Parsons endeavour'd robbing the Flock of their Parish; and as the Prophet says, making like People, like Priest, by this debauching with the bad Men in it, and thereby scandalizing the good Men of it, by this ill Life, and bad Example; and yet sometimes it has happen'd, that a Parson's black Cassack has sheltered his Faults, whilst a Soldiers red Coat did but serve to aggravate his Crime: We read that *Constantine the Great*, was so high a favourer of his Clergy's Reputation, as he wished they would wear red Coats during their debauchery, that they might not scandalize their Function; for sure a Fault of that Nature, must be much worse in a publick Officer of the Church, than in a private Soldier of an Army.

Indeed 'tis now almost as rare to hear of a Ministers being turn'd out for drinking too much;

much ; as for a season'd *London* Gallant to die for loving too much Beauty, which is a sort of fooling now worn out of fashion, most young Mens hearts being as very fickle, as their Mistresses humors are inconstant; and meer Beauty-Courtship, is now become a Divertisement to pass away time, but not an Instrument to destroy Life, Beauty-Love being now grown of the same temper as the Gout, which though it may torment Men's Bodies, and weaken their Limbs ; yet being but a Pass-time and Divertisement, it rather prolongs their Life, than shortens their Days : The Gout to Life being like Ashes to Fire, though it hinders its clear burning, yet it occasions its longer lasting.

Really for my part, I do not think it a sufficient excuse in a Bishop, upon complaint to him, that such a Minister uses often to drink to excess, to say, if he had known it before, he would never have put him into good Livings ; but now he knows it, why does he not turn him out, and make his shame as publick as his Fault, according to *St. Paul's* Advise *2Tim. 5. 20.* *Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear to do the like ;* and such Bishops as do not, I look upon such Ministers Faults, to be in some sort the Issue and Product of their Bishops neglect.

Indeed I have heard, ( I do not say I believe ) that there have been some Bishops that have given to Ministers in Marriage with their Daughters Church Benefices, instead of mony Portions ; which is an Injustice suitable to that of many Widows, to reckon the Management of their Son's Estates, as an additional part to their own Jointure : And it has been reported,

and I hope it is but meer Report, of some of my Lords the Bishops, that have given large Livings to Ministers, much more on the account of being near of kin to them, than for any Vertue or Learning in them ; only considering that the Living suited well with their Kinsman, but not minding how ill the Kinsman suited with the Living, by which means, they rather dedicated the Church to them, than them to the Church ; which probably may be the reason, that it often happens, that the poorest Livings have the best Preachers, and the richest Parishes the worst Ministers, ( but the Bishops nearest Kinsmen ; ) he giving to them great Livings, whom the University never made good Scholars, nor they themselves sober Christians.

I am sure 'tis a Gospel-rule to all Men, and to Ministers above all, to do things of good Report, which certainly drinking to excess, is not ; for the Apostle *Paul*, is so far from allowing a Minister to be drunk himself, as he will not allow him to keep company with those that are, *no not so much as to eat with a Drunkard*, 1 Cor. 5. 11. and really in my Opinion, since Ministers have their Church Benefices given them, not during natural Life, but religious Living, my Lords the Bishops ought to take away the Benefices of a drunken Minister, and give it to a sober religious Clergy-man ; since 'tis most certain, that there are sober pious Ministers that want good Livings, as well as such scandalous drunken Ministers want good Lives ; and indeed I cannot but think it reasonable, that a Clergy-man that inflames and fires himself by Wine, should be us'd as Fire that breaks and flames out beyond its limited Bounds, which

me of which cannot be hinder'd and quench'd any  
 large way from farther burning, so well as by put-  
 count ting it quite out; nor can I see the least Shadow  
 r any of a Scruple, why a Bishop should fear turning  
 ering a drunken Minister out of his Diocess, when  
 rman, the Apostle tells him, that God himself banish-  
 with eth all Drunkards from his Kingdom.

r de And as 'tis certain, that Riches and Poverty,  
 o the are barely in themselves, a matter without  
 ason, Form, and are susceptible of contrary impres-  
 ings sions, both of good and bad; so truly I fancy  
 ishes Church Livings are much of the same Nature,  
 areft when a Bishop gives them to a truly Learned,  
 ings, Vertuous, and humble, charitable Minister, he  
 cho- will be sure to make a good religious Impressi-  
 on in the Diocess he is of, and the Parish he  
 and lives in, both to his Bishops high Praise, and  
 ood to his Parishioners great good.

is But if he disposes rich Livings to an unlear-  
 w- ned, vain, idle Kinsman, it is a means to puff  
 will him up with Pride, and Idleness, and so occa-  
 ose sion a Dissatisfaction to the Parish he is Minister  
 m- of, and a Disrepute to the Bishop he is of kin  
 n, to, and preferr'd by. For as a King is incon-  
 gi- siderable if stript of all Power and Reputati-  
 gi- on; so a Clergy-man is despicable, that is un-  
 to cloth'd of Piety and Sobriety.

r, And yet such Ministers (as vain, idle and  
 ; unlearned as they are,) must be forced to  
 i- preach every Sunday; and what's worse, the  
 ll Congregation bound, or rather condemn'd to  
 d hear them; though possibly the Office of a Mi-  
 - nister, is not only above the reach of his Abili-  
 s ty to perform, but against the Bias of his own  
 t Genius to undertake, did not the great Advan-  
 tages of such high Preferments push him on to

it, against the Stream of his own natural Inclinations, which perhaps were more fit, and apt, to follow a Pack of Hounds, than to lead a Congregation of Christians, to toss a Glass, than expound a Chapter, to be a fighting Officer, than a Church one ; being so much of St. *Peter's* Temper, as to be more ready to draw his Sword for, than to watch with his Lord and Master.

And thus I have given you in few words, what I take to be the Occasion, of so many bad Preachers, and so many dissatisfied Congregations, and indeed so many ill Livers in the Parishes, where there are such bad Ministers. But 'tis more than time to make my Apology, and humbly beg pardon of my Lords the Bishops, for reflecting so sharply upon Persons of their high Office and Dignity, for which I have as great a reverence, and esteem, as any Man ; and I am sure their Lordships do well know, that at very worst a sharp censuring Pen, is but like a Fireship, which though terrible to all she comes near to, yet 'tis only destructive to that it fastens on : My Discourse only glances at some Bishops, without fastening on any one, and I humbly pray their Lordships, as I do also the Reader, to be assur'd, that I really believe, that there's not one of all my Lords the Bishops, ( as to that filthy scandalous Sin of Drunkenness ) but does detest and abominate it in any Minister ; yet I fear there are some forget to punish that great Fault, and Omission, which I do not at all think springs from the want of their good Intentions, but through the Infirmities of their bad Memories, which is a defect that commonly attends

attends Old Age, without paying any respect to great Dignity ; and therefore such Bishops will I hope the more easily pardon my Presumption in venturing to refresh those whose great Age, has robb'd them of their good Memories, to *memorandum* such of their Lordships of their unactiveness in searching into, and severely punishing of any Minister in their Diocess, that shall be guilty of that foul and scandalous Sin ; and I humbly conceive their Lordships need not be displeas'd at me, it being no Disparagement or Discredit in any kind to them ; for the great God as he is all-powerful in himself, makes use of second Causes to govern this World ; And our Souls though they are never so Heavenly, and all Spiritual, have yet need of our weak, fleshly Bodies, to work their Operations by ; upon which consideration, though I know this Discourse is very dull ; yet 'tis not impossible but it may be able to quicken their Lordship's Memories, as well as a blunt Stone may give a sharp Edge to a Knife ; dull Means have, and may produce quick Effects : We read in the Roman Story, that the hissing of the Geese was the means of saving the Capitol ; and we find in Scripture, that the *Israelites* once borrow'd of the *Egyptians* ; therefore I hope my Lords the Bishops will not esteem it a sufficient Cause, to slight and undervalue what I write to them, as not worth their Consideration, because it contains no matter, and so is of no use ; since I am sure their Lordships are too knowing, to justify that Proposition, for then they must hold That Light is of no use, for it has no matter.

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But my design is not to argue against their Lordships, but only to desire they would not believe, that this Discourse designs reflecting, either on their great Learning, or high Calling, but only on some of their Lordships bad Memories; for I presume not in the least, to pretend to teach them what they do not know, but to mind them a little of what they do; and the ablest Writers of great Volumes, scorn not sometimes to make use of a small Scrip of Paper, as a Memorandum, to mind them of what else they might forget, and that is all my Discourse pretends too, or aims at.

And now to continue on my Discourse of the Ministry, I declare, as to my own Opinion, I am very far from having the least Inclination to be a *Presbyterian Puritan*: And though the Ministers of *Geneva*, have the general Character of being such, yet I cannot but wish, our *English* Ministers would imitate their manner of living, I do not mean, as to their *Presbyterian* Church-behaviour, speaking to the great God of Heaven in the Pulpit, with their Hats on, and to the Magistrate in the Streets, with their Hats off; they making their inward Sanctity in Religion, to destroy their outward Ceremony in the Church, which in my Opinion, argues not so much a Tenderness of their Conscience, as a great weakness in their Judgments; for sure, when we come into God's House of Prayer, our approaching to him there, in our Devotions and Supplications, with humble Postures of the Body, does express, and make part of the inward Reverence of the Soul; and sure, since our gracious God has redeem'd the one, and made the other,



other, we ought to serve and glorifie him in both.

So that I am very far from wishing, our Ministers would imitate the *Geneva* Clergy, in their Unceremonial Behaviour in their Churches, but to follow their Grave, Sober, Ministerial Deportment out of them.

I lived some Years in that *Puritanical* Town, which is only such to the Townsmen of it ; but great Liberty is allow'd to all the Protestant Strangers that come into it, for few Papists do ; and I can truly say, that all the time I was there, I never saw, or heard of a Minister, that upon any Pretence ever went into a Tavern ; and when I met any of them in the Streets, which was but rarely, I observed, that all Persons did pay them great Respect, far from ever using them as many do our Clergy, after a slight familiar manner, calling them in the Streets, *Jack* and *Tom*, how do you do ? Come, let us drink a Glass of Wine together, which too many Gentlemen do, and too many Ministers suffer to be done ; for such Familiarity breeds Contempt, and makes Men as little reverence their Doctrine in the Pulpit, as they do their Persons in the Streets.

Sure none believes a Minister preaches what he thinks, that preacheth strict Lives to others, and leads a loose one himself ; that condemns Drunkenness on *Sundays* in the Pulpit, and yet keeps Drunkards Company all the Week days in the Tavern ; such a sort of *Hermaphrodite*-Preacher, that's partly a good Minister, and partly a good Fellow, the best Character I can give of him, is but the same that was  
given

given long since to a Parson, that was an admirable good Preacher, and an extraordinary good Companion; That when he was in the Pulpit, 'twas pity he should be ever out of it, and when out of it, that he should be ever in it.

I do not say, neither indeed do I think, it scandalous, for a Minister, now and then to go into a Tavern; so that the Errand be good, and the Company sober; so that the stay be short, to visit a Friend, or meet about Business; and provided, that drinking be not the main part of it; for 'tis with a Tavern, as with Fire, if you but just pass the Hand through the Flame, 'twill neither scorch nor burn, but if you stay long, 'twill be sure to do both: And as Solomon says, *Prov. 23. 30, 32. They that tarry long at the Wine, will find at last, that it biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder.*

Indeed it may sometimes happen, that Ministers have to do with young, wild, debauch'd Persons; so that if they do not meet them in a Tavern, they may possibly be forced to go and seek them in a worse place, or not find them at all.

Therefore in such Cases, Ministers may make the same Plea for going to a Tavern, as a *Philosopher* did, for kneeling to a great proud Tyrant, whilst he was speaking to him, who being blam'd for it by some of his Friends, why, said the *Philosopher*, *How could I help u, for having earnest business with him, if his Ears be in his Knees, must I not go where his Ears are?* And do we not read in Scripture, that the Holy Angels themselves went into wicked *Sodom*, when their business call'd them there?

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I profess, I have a high value for Retiredness, especially in such as are Clergy-Men; and how mainly influential such Retiredness is to Prayer, certainly we can have no better a Pattern, than that of our *Blessed Saviour's* own Example, who chose a Mountain, preferring Retiredness there, before the great Crowds of *Jerusalem*.

Certainly, Ministers are not oblig'd for being so, to lead such strict morose Lives, as to need to confine themselves always to their Study, as the great Emperour of *Persia* does to his Court; that his Subjects scarce ever seeing him abroad, might conceive more awe for his Person, when he appears in Publick: Nor need Ministers confine themselves to the strict Severities of a Convent; these are no Duties incumbent by any Gospel Rule, on the Ministerial Function, but rather the contrary; for it being undeniable, that the greater always includes the lesser; it must therefore certainly be, by the same Rule of Proportion, and Parity of Reason, that since the Apostle requires a Bishop to be given to Hospitality in his Diocese, so a Minister ought also to be the like in the lesser Orb of his Parish; and as charitable Hospitality is a kind of Duty belonging to his Office, so is also moderate Recreation a Duty, he stands indebted to his Nature.

I mean, by Ministers moderate Recreations and Pastimes, not only such as offend not God, nor prejudice their Neighbours, but such as do not waste too much of their Time; for Ministers ought to use Recreations, only to fit them to study; and not as our idle *London* Sparks,  
that

that only study for Recreations ; for they are to the Body, like Allay to Gold and Silver, a little makes it run and work the better, but using a great Quantity, debases much its true value ; and indeed, such Ministers as give themselves large Ranges of Pastimes, are apt, as the Apostle says, *To be lovers of Pleasures more than lovers of God.*

Moderate Recreations and Divertisements, is one of the grand Needs Man's Nature requires ; and such necessary innocent Pastimes, are not only lawful, but as necessary for Ministers as others, who ought not to be so very frugal of their Time, as to be lavish of their Health : The Wings of the Mind cannot be always stretched out in studious Contemplation, but must require sometimes Recreative Refreshments ; for the continuance of Study, like that of Labour, as it depends upon Moderation, so 'tis destroy'd by overViolence: Our School-Mistress Nature, teaching us this *Philosophy, That what is violent, cannot be lasting.*

Solomon tells us, *There is a Time to rejoice, as well as to mourn,* to shew us the Impossibility, that all the space of a Man's Life can be equally serious ; and like the *Mediterranean Sea*, to be always without any visible Ebbing or Flowing. Doubtless, God does not exact the full Measure of all our Time, in one Species of a continual Devotion, provided there be an habitual Reference of it to him, in all our Actions ; who allows Mirth, Recreations, and all moderate innocent Divertisements, for Refreshments to our Minds, as he does Sleep for the strengthening our Bodies ; and both are

to dispose us the better, for the Holy Exercises of Piety and Vertue.

Therefore, I would not be so misunderstood, as to be believ'd, I write against Ministers moderate and lawful Recreations, but their unlawful Visitations of Taverns and Tavern-Company; the often Repetition of which, must and will create Scandal: And we know, we are not only commanded to avoid Sin, but to shun the Occasions of it. We read, that the *Nazarites* were not only forbid to drink Wine, but to eat Grapes, from whence the Wine came: And St. Paul directed the *Thessalonians*, *To with-draw from every Brother that walketh disorderly*; and I am sure 'tis a Gospel Rule, *To abstain from the appearance of Evil*. And since Solomon did forbid Kings, *from drinking Wine and strong Drink, lest they should pervert Judgment, and forget the Law*; sure the same Instruction and Prohibition, reacheth as well to all Clergy-Men, that they are also forbid drinking excess of Wine, and strong Drink, lest they forget the Gospel.

I am confident, some of our Ministers would not visit Taverns so oft, nor drink so much, had they not some secret Hope, that they are not taken notice of; and so fancy, they do as the Children of the Captivity did, walk in the midst of the Furnace-flames, without so much as the smell of Fire to pass on them; and for all their running into Taverns, (the Furnace of Drunkards) not to be inflam'd with the Guilt, or scorch'd with the Scandal of Debauchery: Indeed it would be much wiser, that such an infected Minister, would forget  
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that miraculous Deliverance, and still remember to set before him this Example of *Gehazy*, who by putting on the Clothes of *Naaman*, put on his Leprosie with them: Infection always attends the infected, and so does Vice, still wait on the vicious. *Solomon* says, *He that walketh with the Wise, shall learn Wisdom*; and sure by the Rule of Contraries, I may also say, *He that keepeth Company with Drunkards, will learn Drunkenness*.

Debauch'd Company will certainly prejudice us whilst we live, and possibly destroy us after Death; but Pious Vertuous Company, will not only credit and advantage us whilst we Live, but may benefit us after Death. We have a very strange Example Recorded in Scripture, of an Advantage one had by lying in the Grave with a Holy Man; for he that was buried with the Bones of *Elisba*, recovered his Life, *2 Kings* 13. 21. for only lodging with him in the Grave, by a Miracle of that Prophet.

History informs us, That *St. Hierom* himself was censured, for his often visiting the fair and vertuous Lady *Paula*, to comfort her after the great loss of her dear Husband *Toxatius*, a Lady, that was made of all the Excellencies and Beauties, that could any way adorn, either her Soul or Body; and her high Birth suited to both.

This vertuous Pattern of Women, when her Husband died, to shew that she cared for none in the World, when he was out of it, retired from her own House, to live in God's; and since she could enjoy no longer her Husband's Company on Earth, she resolv'd only

to entertain her self with God in Heaven, by her constant Praying to him, and Serving of him; and in order thereunto, presently left Rome, and in a Pilgrimage-manner, travell'd through *Cyprus* and *Palestine*, and ended her Pilgrimage in a strict Religious Retirement at *Bethlehem*; in which Place, History says, she Erected three Monasteries, or Feminine Academies for her Sex; as Houses of Retirement from the World, to spend their Time, and end their Lives in, by constant Praying, and Singing Hallelujahs to their Maker.

The occasion of glancing my Discourse a little on this Subject, is on Design, that a debauch'd Minister may be induced by it, more seriously to consider and reflect, how very apt Censure is to fall, not only on vertuous Women, but on the most Saint-like men, upon some seeming Occasions, (and which were in all Reason, but seeming;) for sure 'twas very irrational to conclude, that her Eyes could burn with Lust, that were always wet with Tears; and that good St. *Hierom*, who came merely to comfort her afflicted Condition, (who was only fit to create Pity, not receive Love,) could at that time have a thought of attempting her spotless Chastity; yet all these convincing Circumstances, could not it seems, protect him from Scandalous Censure.

Let a debauch'd Minister therefore consider, that by the same Rule, how much more improbable is it, that scandalous Censure should not overtake a Minister, who often visits the Taverns, and not judge him to be a Tavern lover; for how can he be so unreasonable as to

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expect, that Censure will forget he is a Minister, when he himself does often forget in the Tavern, that he is so, by drinking to an Excess; and so makes himself a meer Beast, by drinking away that Reason, that should differ him from one?

For my part, I cannot fancy how a drunken Minister can expect to be believ'd, or hope to be trusted by Pious considering Men, when he has cast off Truth in his Holy Calling, and Sobriety as to his vertuous Living, which sure will never gain Credit to what he says, or Esteem to what he does; for Drunkenness is not only a true Symptom, but the sad Effect of his debauch'd Inclination; for as Men's Wealth is discovered by their large Purchases, and great Dealings, and Diseases known by outward Signs, as Paleness, Faintings, and the like; so indeed, the high Calling of a Minister of the Holy Jesus, ought to be known to the World, by his pious, strict and exemplary Life, constant Humility, and great Charity, and all other vertuous Actions, that belong to a Church-Officer that serves at the Altar; for a Minister that has a Holy Soul, must lead a vertuous Life, since he whose Principles are truly Religious, his Actions of course must be truly vertuous, as a Cholerick Man's Words are usually Cholerick like himself.

Really, if I had my free Vote, and full Desire in this grand Affair, I would have Holy Orders to be like Holiness it self; and they only that deserve it, to possess it, and those whose Life and Conversation did not render them fit for it, should never be receiv'd and admitted



admitted to it, though they were never so near a Kin to the Bishop, or had lived never so long in an University; for Bishops Kindred are not always Saints, nor University-Men still good Divines.

Truly, I never beheld a Clergy-man over-gone in Drink, but still it minded me of *Socrates's* saying, of the famous Carver of *Athens*, who being at a publick Feast, and *Socrates* observing him to be much in Drink, and yet still striving to be more, *Socrates* desired the Company to observe the strange Temper of that rare Artist, *That could take such Pains, to make Stones look like Men, and yet can now take such Pleasure, to make himself look like a Beast.*

Really, such a Minister that is infected with this scandalous Sin, ought as an Antidote against it, to reflect often on the Number of Years, the Sums of Mony, the several Days Labour, the many Nights Watching he hath spent in Schools and Universities, to make him fit for the Dignity of a Clergy-man; and next, to consider what great Pains he takes, and Rhetorick he uses in the Pulpit, to perswade his Parishioners to live like Saints, and yet can all this time be pleas'd himself to live like a Beast, by wallowing in the Mire of nasty Drunkenness; and thereby, not only rob himself of the Reverend Character of a good Minister, but deserve the sad Title of a bad Christian, and to have his name, not only blotted out of the Communion of Saints, but rased out of the List of Rationals.

We read in St. *Matthew*, of a Miracle in the course of Grace, of Stones to raise up Children to *Abraham* ; and really, I see no reason, why it may not be call'd a Miracle in the course of Wickedness, out of Christian Parents to raise Children to the Devil ; nay, what is yet stranger, that any Gospel-Minister that attends at the Altar , who wears the Gown of a Minister, and receives the Tythes of a Clergy-man, can yet, whilst he wears God's Livery, entertain himself in the Devils Service ; for certainly, drinking to Excess is Satan's Work, it being a Gospel-Truth, *That no Drunkard shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.*

I fancy 'twould be impossible, any Minister could continue in the Practice of this Sin, it being such a nasty, as well as unreasonable Vice, as not only any Minister, but any Man cannot but be ashamed of himself, if he but calls to Mind, that all the very Beasts, that are guided by no higher Principles than that of meer Sense, do yet disdain Drunkenness, and will on no account, be invited to be guilty of such a foul Excess, as to transgress the regular ends and needs of Nature, by drinking more than suffices.

And indeed, we need only look on the Surface, and Superficial Part of this vile and scandalous Sin, without diving at all into the dismal Inferences, and dangerous Consequences of it, and its Attendencies that are numberless : For Drunkenness puts a Man, not only besides the Power of all others governing him, but the very possibility of governing himself ; his Drunkenness making him do many things, that his sober and natural Temper would utterly abominate ;

abominate; for when a Man is put beside himself, he is he knows not who, and may do he knows not what; kill his Father, curse his Mother, lie with his Daughters, ( witness Lot, ) and not only act the greatest Extravagancies, but highest Impieties imaginable.

In short, I cannot fancy what a debauch'd Minister can propose, to excuse this scandalous Sin to others, or to moderate the shameful Guilt of it to himself, in daring to profane and vilifie his Office, by a drunken Life, unless it be, that he keeps some secret Hope in Reserve, that our Saviour will say to him, for drinking the Week-days, what he said to the Jewish Priest-hood for profaning the Sabbath; *And the Priests on the Sabbath Day, profane the Sabbath, and are blameless*; but that was spoken by our Saviour, as an Argument against the Pharisees, in Justification of his Disciples eating the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath Day, to satisfy their Hunger; and therefore, Christ's Disciples so eating on the Sunday, will never excuse a Minister's drinking to excess the Week days; since the Disciples eating, was only to satisfy Nature, but a Ministers drinking to excess, is only to abuse himself and his Calling, which ought still to be soberly strict, and ever piously exemplary.

But this is a Subject fitter for a Volume than a Discourse; yet, though I have not writ near so much as this Subject will well allow, yet I'm sure, I have writ much more than their Patience can well suffer; and therefore, having already far exceeded my intended Brevity, I shall write no more, and wish, I had not reason to have writ so much on this kind of

Subject, and on any of this Holy Order of Men, whom I had ever a great Reverence for, and shall still pay a constant Kindness, and real Respect to; and therefore I desire, that none of the Clergy will be offended at this Discourse, for I design, chiefly to censure my own Faults, not others: I here reprove the Vice, without naming the Man, and general Words cannot reach particular Persons.

Therefore, that Minister that is infected with, or finds himself inclined to this bestial and scandalous Sin of Drunkenness, let him not think, I point and aim at him; but let him think of himself, and remember his Holy Office; for 'tis his bad Life, not my dull Pen, that will condemn and punish him.

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The SIXTH

# DISCOURSE,

*Of Dull Long* SERMONS.

**T**IS a common Proverb, *That Truth is not to be spoken at all Times*; and I am sure 'tis a true saying, *It ought not to be asham'd at any Time*: And therefore, I shall not fear to make a true Discovery of my Opinion, as to *dull long Sermons*, which is this, That I esteem an Hours Sermon of the very best Rank of Preachers, still enough, and of the worst sort of Ministers, ever too much, because so bad: For, I believe, an ingenious pious Discourse, that does not exceed the Pulpits Hour-Glass, can never tire the Congregations Patience, but they will like it well, and praise it much, though most understand it little. For as 'tis the common Soldier that makes up the main Body of an Army, so 'tis the vulgar sort of People, that fills up the Body of the Church; and few of them understand high Notions, or quick Reasoning; and no wonder, when many of the Country-Parsons themselves do not, if one may judge of their Learning by their Preaching.

Sure, if these dull sort of Country-Preach-ers have Wit and Parts, they keep it up only to their own use, not their Congregations profit; or else perhaps they fancy, that because coarse Diet suits best with Country Stomachs on working Days, that therefore, such a kind of spiritual Food will do the like on Sundays; which occasions some of them to make their Sermons of such coarse Home-spun Stuff, as is much apter to stupifie Mens Attentions, than inspirit their Devotions, having little in them of Weight, excepting that of over-loading their Congregations Patience; their Sermons evaporating into nothing but meer Talk, containing no substantial Arguments for the Conviction of Sin, or spiritual Allurements, for the Practice of Vertue.

Their Sermons teaching their Congregations little other Doctrin, than that of Patience; and truly to learn 'em that Vertue, they need no other Logick than that of hearing them, their Sermons teaching Patience, just as certain Charms drive away some kinds of Distempers; to repeat the Words, is to effect the Cure.

I have heard some of these dull Parsons, that did not so much follow their Text, as St. *Peter* did our Saviour afar off; for they follow'd it not at all, (I mean, to any purpose) and the jest of it is, that most of these Preachers when they are in the Pulpit, think to deal with their Parishioners, as the Sun does with the Northern Climes; making by his long stay, an amends for his weak heat; so they fancy, (or rather mis-fancy) that what their Sermons want in the goodness of the Matter, they

they will make up by the largeness of the Measure, and by that means, make the Disease much worse, by that kind of Remedy : For though Solomon says about cleaving of Wood, *If the Iron be blunt, there must be more strength added to the Blow* ; yet he never said, to the opening and cleaving a Text, *That if the Preacher be blunt and dull, that therefore he ought to add more length to his Sermon.*

In a Word, I have heard some of these sad ignorant Country Preachers, make such long useless Sermons, as nothing less than great Charity and high Civility, could protect their Sermons from being called the foolishness of Preaching ; but yet, though their Sermons be never so bad, their Calling is very good, and therefore we must reverence our Ministers, as we are Christians ; and though some of them are inconsiderable in their Preaching, and not over vertuous in their Lives, yet we are not to make a Jest at their failings, but pay a respect to their Office, for their Master's sake, as we do Livery-Men, not on their own Account, but Master's : Yet the usual Apology of such is, That their Sermons are as good as their Livings ; an Excuse, which corresponds but ill with their Office ; for, certainly 'tis but bad Pulpit-Doctrin, though very good Cook-shop Logick, to proportion Mens Meat, not according to what they can eat, but what they will pay : But these Measures will not hold in the Distribution of our spiritual Food, that because my Lords the Bishops will not give such Ministers as good Livings as they expect, ( though possibly, they have already larger than they deserve, ) that therefore,

fore, they will not allow their Congregation as much, and as good spiritual Food as they ought; and by reason their Bishops do not (as they fancy) use them well, that therefore, they may use their Congregation ill, and Penance them for others Faults.

I fancy, 'tis often with the Church as 'tis with the State, and that 'tis as impossible, for Bishops to give great Livings to all the Ministers that think they deserve them, as 'tis for Princes to reward all their Subjects, answerable to the value they place on their own Merits and Services; and therefore, some Men will still be complaining, either because they fancy their Friends are ill requited, or themselves not well recompensed.

When, may be if truly considered, 'tis not that their Prince is less kind, or they more deserving; but because they extend their Merit farther than it ought, and so think their Prince less kind than he should be; still remembering their present Desires, but often forgetting their former Rewards; their new Desires defacing their old Obligations; so apt are Men to look forward on Greatness and Preferment; few reflecting on what they really are, but most, on what they vainly would be.

In short, 'tis a common practice with some Clergy-men, to use their Bishops, as some great Generals do their Sovereigns; who set so high a Value on their past Services, and have so great an Opinion of their present Merit, as they will never allow they have lost their Princes favour on any other Account, but that of having over-merited it.

And



And 'tis an experimental Truth, practis'd by Clergy-men, as well as others, that real Obligations penetrate less into their Hearts, than fancied Injuries; most Men being more active to revenge a Discourtesie, than to requite an Obligation. Sure such Ministers never read *Seneca's* good Advice, or at least, will not practise it; *He that preacheth Gratitude, pleads the Cause both of God and Man; for without Gratitude, we can neither be Sociable, or Religious.*

I must confess, I cannot but think it strange, that my Lords the Bishops will Ordain such a sort of very ignorant Preachers, nor can I but pity such as are confin'd to hear them; sure, Bishops only give such Men Livings, suitable to the worst of Preachers, but their poor Congregations must give them Audience, answerable to the best of Sermons; for an Hour, is an Hour in all places; nor will the Pulpit-Glass run the faster, because the Sermon is bad, nor the slower, because 'tis good.

Really, I have often busied my Thoughts, how it happens, that *England* being now fully planted with Christian Persons, (though indeed, almost waste of good Christian Livers) and that the Doctrin of our Blessed Saviour, being now received in all places of it, (though strictly practis'd by very few in it,) how it comes to pass, that such Crowds can have such an over-grown Zeal, to hear a long dull Sermon in a Corner, and yet so little esteem for the publick Prayers in the Church, unless it be, that meer hearing, is the most easie and lazy of all Religious Duties.

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Most of these Hearers value Preaching, as Children do Apples, esteeming still the largest for the best ; as if Sermons were like Money, the heavier the better : I had the Curiosity in the time of the late Usurpers Government, to hear some of the famous Conventicle-holders-forth, Preach ; and as to my own Opinion, I found their long Prayers, cock'd-up Eyes, zealous demure Looks, with their many Antick Postures, gave me more Divertisement to see, than Advantage to hear. These make their strong long-winded Lungs, to pass for the true Symptoms of a good Soul, and their eager loud Talking, for a high fervency of Spirit ; and if they do but beat and thump the Pulpit-Cushion lustily, no matter though they never touch their Text, so they can Preach but earnest and long : These Men paying such a Reverence and Devotion to a long-winded Sermon, as if 'twere the only Essential Means, and true end of all Religion ; when in plain Truth, the main Design and principal End, that the best sort of Preaching can aim at, is to stir us up, and mind us of the Duties of the Gospel Religion, both for our Understanding and Practice ; but yet it self, is not the way nor end, in any other manner, than if one should say, Such a Man carried me to my Journeys end, only because he directed me in the right way to it, when all know, his Tongue, without my Will, his Direction, without my own Motion, could never have advanced me so much as one step towards it ; for, though *Scripture* stiles Ministers God's *Messengers* and *Ambassadors*, yet their best Sermons, can be but a delivering God's Message in earnest Words,

Words, and perswasive Arguments, to inforce their Doctrin on our Lives and Practices.

But 'tis the well regulating our Wills and Affections, according to the Precepts of the Gospel; such as Justice and Temperance, Innocence of Mind, and Purity of Heart; when we perform frequent Acts of Charity with Cheerfulness, and are void of vain-Glory, but full of pure Devotion; when we use constant fervent Prayer, and daily hearty Repentance, with strict Endeavours for the keeping all God's Commands, which will instruct us, to love God with all our Soul, and our Neighbours as our selves: For these are the executive parts of God's Errand by his Ministers, and his chief Commands, all which we obliged are sincerely to obey, that we may receive the Comforts and Approbations of a good Conscience, as a constant Feast, and certain Recompence in this World: For thus a truly good and generous Christian, does not so much propose the profit of a good Action to himself, as the satisfactory Duty of performing it to his God.

In a Word, I'm sure 'tis our well Practising, not the Ministers good Preaching, that will carry us to Heaven; which is plainly told by the Apostle, *That 'tis not the hearers, but the doers of God's Will, that shall be saved.*

And for matter of publick Prayers in our Churches on the Week days, I have often observed, as I have gone to hear the Morning Prayers in the Cathedrals, to have seen there three or four Persons, besides the poor Alms-People, who follow the Loaves; attending there perhaps, as much, if not more for their  
Corporal

Corporal Food, than their Spiritual ; which minds me of a merry fancy, of a Gentleman, who was going one morning into one of these Cathedrals, ( more out of Curiosity than Devotion, as you will easily believe by the Story ) at Prayer-time, and finding the Congregation to consist, of only five or six Persons, he begg'd their Pardon for coming in among them, saying, *He believ'd they had a mind to be private ;* and so for fear of disturbing them, or rather troubling himself, he went presently out of the Church.

And yet 'tis indeed observable, that some of these very Men, that will not be perswaded to meet at the publick Prayers of the Church, will upon no account miss going to hear a dull tedious Conventicle-Sermon, either of a Lay-man, or a silenc'd Minister ; and sooner harken to his canting up of some new factious Opinions, which savour little, either of good Doctrin, or true Loyalty ; and rather follow such a Man's Spirit, than an Orthodox Preacher, only because he is such.

Indeed, these Conventicle-Sermons, among other ill Qualities, did in the Usurpers Time, often beat in Mens Ears, so much the Liberty of Christians, as it did for a long time, help to drive out of their Hearts, the Allegiance of Subjects.

And these very Men, who will not wait half an Hour to hear Common-Prayer ( sure, only because 'tis such, ) in the Church, will yet listen, and attend with great Devotion, to hear one of these dull long-winded Sermons with great Gusto in a Corner, though this Mungrel-sort of Preachers, often talk unsuitable,

which is unsuitable both to Scripture and Reason; for they generally use such Tautologies, by their extemporary indigested Expressions, and vain long-winded Repetitions, (which is much fitter to trouble the Ear, than to inflame the Heart,) which our Bleſſed Saviour declares against, *Forbidding us to use them as the Heathen, who think to be heard for their much speaking.*

And wise Solomon stiles it, no better than the *Sacrifice of Fools*: For doubtless over-long Sermons, when fraught with idle and vain Repetitions, either in Conventicle Meetings, or Church Assemblies, are not only displeasing to the Congregation, but displeasing to God himself; the Truth of which, we may be easily satisfied of, if we will but harken to the holy Spirit, who says, *God is in Heaven, and we are on Earth, therefore our Words ought to be few.*

I have heard some Scholars say, 'tis a Rule in Logick, *That which proves too much, proves nothing*; that is, one may miss as much by over-shooting the Mark, as by under-shooting it: I fancy, this Rule may also reach Preaching; and he that makes his Sermon too long, misses the mark of good Preaching, as to his giving any great benefit to his Hearers; for a long Sermon that tires my Patience, must needs dull my Memory, and drown my Attention; for 'tis usual with great Crowds of Words, as with great Crowds of Men, for one to hinder another; and therefore I wish, all long-winded Preachers (of which there are too many,) would observe St. Paul's Advice, and *become Wise to Sobriety*; for I would have Ministers Preach so wisely, to keep in the sober Measure of an Hour.

Certainly,

Certainly, this Brood of Conventicle-Lovers; that are so averſe to hear the publick Prayers of the Church, and ſo eager to run to a Sermon in a private Meeting, (of which in this Age of general Liberty, there needs no ſuch thing as Privacy, all Opinions, except *Romaniſts*, being now allowed in Publick,) cannot yet have the Confidence to deny, that Prayer does not much ſurpaſs the beſt Preaching; ſince they cannot but allow, that Prayer muſt be more eſſentially neceſſary to Salvation, ſince every one may fit and apply Prayers, according to their ſeveral Wants, and preſent Occaſions.

But a Sermon-Diſcourſe, be it never ſo piously Excellent, and ingeniouſly Learned, yet 'tis ſtill promicuouſly applied to all the Congregation in general; and it often happens, that Men make it their Buſineſs, to carry away moſt of that part of the Sermon they need leaſt; many being more apt, to diſcover the *Mote in their Brother's Eye*, than the *Beam in their own*; they will poſſibly remember what the Miniſter ſays, againſt Pride and Covetouſneſs, and ſuch Sins as they are not enclin'd to, but know their Neighbours are infected with; but will ſkip the Sins of Swearing and Drunkenneſs, and ſuch others, as they themſelves are guilty of; and therefore, do not reap any benefit by the Sermon, becauſe they do not apply its Doctrin to their own proper ſhare; and ſo like good Phiſick, ill applied, does rather hurt, than good: For it may be ſaid of Preaching, what a *Philoſopher* ſaid of Reason, *That 'tis not ſo much the great Perfection, as the ſiter Proportion of Reason, that works*  
upon

upon Mens Minds and Understandings: And we read in Scripture, that when David was to fight with Goliath, *He chose a Sling that fitted his own Hand, before Saul's Armor, that was too big for his Body*; For those things are only necessary, which promote that end, for which they are necessary.

In short, Sermons are only Discourses of God and Religion, but Prayers, are our direct Addresses to him. Sermons can only tell us what we ought to do, but Praying, is the very doing what we ought: Prayer is the very best part of a Sermon, concocted into spiritual Nourishment; our Love to God express'd in fervent Prayer, being the very Soul and Spirit of Devotion; and therefore, since Prayer is the Quintessence of Preaching, certainly the practical part of Holiness, must needs, as much transcend the Theory, as Health, does Physick, or performing vertuous Actions, does the bare being told they are such. But because my last Discourse on some Ministers ill Lives, was like their Crime, very large; this my Discourse on Ministers dull Preaching, shall be as all their Sermons ought to be, very short: And so I have done with dull long Sermons; and I wish for the publick Good, all Preachers had so too.

## The SEVENTH

## DISCOURSE,

*Of the Deceitfulness of many Lawyers,  
with a sure Antidote against the Poi-  
son of bad Titles, and false Convey-  
ances.*

**C**ertainly our *English* Laws design exceed-  
ing well, and are extraordinary good,  
(if with I could justly say, all our Lawyers were  
so too,) being Established, as the wise Man  
says; *For a Buckler to them that walk uprightly,  
and a scourge to all evil doers.* But yet our old Laws  
being writ in *Latin* and *French*, it renders *Ma-  
gna Charta*, at least, to the vulgar sort of the  
Laity, but as the Mass is to the common sort  
of the *Papists*, us'd in an unknown Language;  
while all of them are bound to hear, and few  
are taught to understand.

And truly, many of the ignorant Laity in  
the Law, are sometimes engaged in Law-Suits,  
without ever knowing the true reason why;  
but are perswaded by their Lawyers, to believe  
they have just reason to go to Law, and so pin  
their Quarrel and Cause, on their Lawyer's  
skill, as *Papists* do their Faith on their Priests;  
and though it often happens, that the Lawyer's  
Justice



Justice is as very small in distributing their good Counsel, as the Lay-man's ignorance is great, as to the understanding of it; our Laws being now-a-days us'd, more for the learned Counsels Profit, than the ordinary sort of Lay-mens Knowledge; the famous Counsellors of the Law, Monopolizing it, in a manner by whole-sale, to their own Use and Advantage; and then deliver it out to the poor ignorant Laity, but by Retail, after what Manner, and according to such Rates and Delays, as they think fit.

And therefore, really in my Opinion, our so entirely depending on our Lawyers Knowledge, Truth and Skill, on every doubtful Word in a Writing, is a great Violence, both to our Sense and Reason, not suiting with either, to be so lead about blind-fold by them; for they will not let us see clearly what's our own by right, without putting us to the trouble and charge, of Feeing one Lawyer, or more, as Vouchers to confirm us, in the Assurance that 'tis so; which are but like Pass-Ports from the petty Princes, along the River of *Rhine*; that can carry us no farther, than the narrow bounds of their own small Territories.

So many Lawyers Counsels, extend no farther than their little Knowledge, (and perhaps, less Honesty;) and when we have occasion but to travel a little farther in any ambiguous Word, or dark and doubtful Expression in our Conveyances, we must post to a new Council, and ten to one, but he contradicts the former, and unassures us, what the other did assure us; and then forsooth, we are oblig'd to Fee them both, to reconcile their Opinions, when in

Truth, neither of them are fit Judges, both being concerned Parties as to their own Interest, which is to obstruct, or at least delay agreeing, which none can doubt, if they will but reflect on the many Scruples, Difficulties, and Objections they usually conjure up, to puzzle and amaze us with: Really some Lawyers make Law Suits to be a kind of Circle, without any End, except that of our Mony and Patience.

When indeed, I believe our Laws might without Difficulty be known to all, and plainly understood by every one, of the very lowest Class of Reason, or at least, as much of the Laws, as relates to the grand and dangerous Traffick of buying and selling Estates; which might easily be settled and secured, without the great Sin of cheating another, or the common fear of being cosen'd ones self; and so prevent all these costly, vexatious, wrangling Law-suits, which are but the usual Appendencies that attend now-a-days most Purchasers.

And as some Men are industrious in getting and conveying Estates to their Children, so some Lawyers are as subtle and careful, in so wording these Conveyances, as to be sure that their binding Clauses shall never be so close made up, but that they will still leave room for a private Trap-door to let in some doubts, to bring more Grist to their Mill, and to breed more cost and trouble for their Clients Cause, and more fresh Fees to their own Purse.

And I fancy, these Inconveniencies may easily be prevented, if we were, or would be but so wise and prudent, in this grand Affair, as our Neighbours are in *Holland*; for they have an Office and Book of Registry, in every Parish of

of their Country, to secure all Purchases from Fines, and to prevent all Disputes, Quarrels, and Law-suits relating to them.

And truly, if we would but observe the wise Measures of *Holland* in this particular, it would not only bring a constant Security to the Subject, of what they buy, but bring a noble Revenue to the King, out of all they sell, with as much Satisfaction, as all contribute to the advantage of the Post-Office, of which there are few that pay not their shares, and none that are not much satisfied with it; and so I am confident, all except the Lawyers would allow their consent to a Registry-Office, without the least murmuring: And as to this Branch of His Majesty's Revenue, I am sure His Majesty would read it in a plain legible Hand; and some say, *The Crown Revenue has been often us'd to be writ in Short-hand, and given in large Accounts.* If it has been so, I am sorry for it; but whether it has or has not, 'tis none of my Business here.

Which is to acquaint you, that I lived many Years in *Holland*, and was assur'd by a Wise and Noble *English* Peer, that lived, married, and sold an Estate he had by his Wife there; (an Experiment which I wanted Land to try,) that every one holds their Lands in that Country, by Deed, under the Seal of the Parish his Estate is in: And the way to buy and sell Lands there, is after this manner. But first, you must know there is in every Parish of *Holland*, a Map perfectly drawn, of the exact Number, and true Value of every Acre, in each Parish in that Country, which is kept in the Chancel of every Parish-Church: And there is in every one of these Parishes, one they call a Scout-Master,

which is the chief Magistrate of it ; and with him there are two Burgers, or more, and a Secretary, which is the Master and Keeper of the Registry there : Now, if any one has a desire to sell his Land, and has agreed with a Chapman for it, he is to acquaint the Scout of the Parish his Lands are in, therewith, who appoints him a certain day for it. Then the Seller is to go to the Secretary, and pay him the fortieth part of the Mony he sells his Lands for, which Proportion belongs to the States, of all Lands that are sold in their Country.

Then 'tis the buyer's part to search the Registry Books, what Debts are entred on those Lands ; or if any Intails, or Caveats, or other Incumbrances of any other Nature, be Register'd there, and if there be none that are a barring to the Sale, then the Seller is next to get a Certificate from the Secretary, which is to be produc'd in open Court, to the Scout, two Burgers and Secretary, which make a *Quorum* ; which Certificate is read aloud in the Court, and there they view the Sums of Mony that are indorsed on their Deeds, or Patent, which they compare with those in the Registry Books, that they may truly find out, and justly sum up, what Debts are due on that Estate, with the Time when, and the Persons to whom, those Indorsed, or Register'd Sums are due to ; and if the Persons are absent, the several Sums so set down, with the just Interest thereof, are deposited for their use in Court ; and the Estate so cleared, and all Incumbrances removed, and the fortieth part paid, the Scout calls for the Sellers Deed, or Patent, which he held this Land by, and cancels it in open Court,

Court, and there gives the Buyer a new Deed ;  
 ( for note, that none purchases from the Seller,  
 but the States of the Parish his Lands are in, )  
 under their Hand and Seal ; which contain only  
 these few Lines.

**W**hereas John O Nokes, Proprietor of the  
 Lands of Green-Acre, in the Parish of  
 — did make his Request to us, for leave to sell all  
 his Right, Title, and Claim unto the said Lands unto  
 John O Style, for the sum of — which we  
 consented to, and which Sum the said John O Stiles  
 hath received : In Consideration whereof, we the  
 said Scout, Burgers, and Secretary of the Parish  
 of — do sell unto John O Stiles, his Heirs and  
 Assigns, for ever, all the aforesaid Lands, &c.

And if the Seller owes any other Debts, not  
 Register'd as aforesaid, the Creditors must ap-  
 ply themselves to his Person or Goods, or some  
 other way ; but can never fasten in the least on  
 the Land so sold, which occasions their giving  
 fifty Years Purchase for Lands in *Holland* ;  
 whereas in *England* and *Ireland*, for want of  
 this means of Security, they usually sell but for  
 twenty in the one, and ten in the other, be-  
 cause of the Uncertainty of Titles, and the  
 Danger of Incumbrances, which you see in *Hol-*  
*land* by their Registers Office, is with little  
 Trouble and small Expence prevented.

But if any Caveat be enter'd of an Intail  
 made, or Gifts given by the Proprietor, either  
 on Marriage, or other valuable Considerations ;  
 in such Cases, the Court never disposes of any  
 such Lands so incumbered, till all Incumbrances  
 are first removed, which prevents prejudice to  
 all Parties.

I have heard some Lawyers object, If such as have Intail'd Estates cannot sell them, but those whose Estates are not, may, Where is the need of such a *Dutch* Registry in *England* and *Ireland*, since all have the like Power and Liberty without it? I grant they have all the like freedom to sell, but I deny all have the same Security to buy; for by purchasing according to this *Dutch* manner, 'tis impossible any can be cosened in his Purchase and Title, or disturbed by Incumbrances in his Possession; but by our *English* way of purchasing, thousands have been deceived, and thousands more will, by Mortgages, Judgments, and many false Arts and cheating Conveyances, which the best Lawyers now in *England* can witness, by their own woful Experience, as I my self have heard from their own Mouths.

But though 'tis most certain, if such a Book of Registry were Established by Act of Parliament, to be kept in every Shire-Town in *England*, and County-Town in *Ireland*, with the like Orders and Rules, that are now practised in *Holland*; though it would doubtless lessen the Rates of Interest-Mony, yet it would certainly raise much the value of Land, by securing the Purchases of them.

Yet some fancy, that the bringing in such a Law in *England* and *Ireland*, would be of the like Nature and Prejudice to the Lawyers, as opening and using the Coal-Mines about *Greenwich*, would be to *London*; which though it would undeniably bring a vast Benefit and Convenience to that City, and all the Country about it, yet 'twould undeniably spoil and ruin the Coal-Trade from *New-Castle*, and consequently,

ly, highly prejudice *England's* great Nursery of Seamen.

And so establishing a Law of Registry, in these His Majesty's Kingdoms, though doubtless, it would bring a great Advantage and Security to all Purchasers in them; yet it would silence and destroy the vast numerous brood of Lawyers, of the Temple and the Inns of Court, which like Birds of Prey, feed on the ignorant and weaker sort; for such a Law of Registry, would utterly ruine their Trade and Employment, of daily starting new Difficulties, and raising fresh Scruples in our Law-suits, to occasion wrangling among them, and to extract fresh Fees from us; for commonly Lawyers Opinions are like their Faces, very rarely that ever two agree in all Points, and therefore, the Conveyances they usually make, are a kind of Characters, which occasion us unavoidably to hire the Key of their Counsel, to Decipher our Deeds we bought of them, and they made us believe, were plainly understood by us; and by these, and such kinds of dealing, our Lawyers are become to most Mens great Estates, as Wives are to most rich Families; such a sort of necessary Evils, as few Men can live conveniently without them, but few contentedly with them.

In a Word, Lawyers and Physitians, are now in a manner Intail'd, as a Rent-charge on most large Estates and great Families, and are become such a customary and necessary Charge, (I had almost said Evil,) as rich Men cannot live at ease on their Estates, without a Lawyers Advice, nor die at quiet in their Beds, without a Doctors help. Though we read in the Gospel

Gospel of a Woman, that had for many years an *Issue of Blood*, and who had spent much Time and Money among the Phisicians, and was made the worse by them; but we read no where in all the Bible, that any sick Person was ever made the better for them.

And because 'twould be against the Practice of most Lawyers, not to make some Answer to every Objection; for I cannot but fancy, that all Counsellors of Law take the same Oath, or Engagement in point of Pleading, as 'tis commonly said, all Captains of the Kings Men of War do against His Majesty's Enemies, which is not to yield, though never so over-power'd by numbers of Men, and strength of Ships: So our Lawyers think, they are bound to speak on in their Clients Cause, though they know what they say, cannot advantage it; yet they scorn to lose their Cause upon a *Nihil dicit*, or be themselves choak'd with a Glass of Mum; on which account, they will discharge (though they have but one poor shot of Objections,) against a whole Fleet of Conveniencies and Advantages, that present themselves full frated, and well arm'd, with sufficient Reasons and Arguments, to destroy all Opposers against this Law of Registry.

For the grand and main Objection that ever I heard against it, is, that such a Law will lay open, and expose to publick view, several Mens Estates, which have possibly for many Years, if not Ages, remain'd quiet in an undisturb'd Security; and that this new Law perhaps, may produce, or raise new Titles by unravelling the old, and thereby occasion great Confusion in Estates and Titles, to the high  
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Disturbance, if not utter Ruine of many noble,  
great and ancient Families.

But indeed, this their grand Objection is no  
other, than the cloudy Apparition of their  
own senseless Fears, which is easily answer'd in  
a Word, That this designed Law, is not to ob-  
lige any Man to Register his Estate and Debts,  
but only gives a Liberty for those to Register,  
that do desire it; and such as think it inconve-  
nient for them, may let it alone; so that if any  
are prejudiced by this Law, they may thank  
themselves for it.

But indeed this Prejudice may as well happen  
to him that refuses it, as this Advantage will  
to him that does it; that he who omits it, may  
occasion his Estate to be look'd upon, as deeply  
incumbred, or his Title much defective; and so  
thereby cause him, in all Probability to want  
dealers, if need be to furnish him with Money  
on any pressing occasion, either upon Sale or  
Mortgage, whilst he that Registers his Estate,  
can never want Money upon the Security of  
either.

I do not know what the *Papists* will say a-  
gainst this Law of Registry, for may be they'll  
place the same Faith on their Lawyers skill, as  
they do on their Clergies Word, which is  
stamp'd with a kind of Infallibility: But I dare  
appeal to all that own themselves Disciples of  
*St. Thomas*, (I mean, that like him, will believe  
no farther than as the matter lies open to their  
Sight and Experiment, which certainly are  
good Guides to us in meer worldly Affairs,  
(though they were very far from being so to  
him in spiritual,) if there be not less Danger  
and Charge, and a hundred times more Cer-  
tainty

tainty and Expedition, in reading only a few Lines plainly writ on the back-side of a Deed, or in a Registry Book, easily to be understood, being without dark Expressions, dubious Words, or double Meanings; not writing this thing, and meaning that, like those that Squint, who cast their Eyes one way, and look another; Than to Trust and Fee many Lawyers to plead ones Cause, who design often quite contrary to what they speak, and so spin out Trials, sometimes not only for Years, but almost Ages; many times speaking not so much to the Merit of the Cause, as to the Aggrandizing their own vain-glorious Wit, by shewing their good Parts, and great Reading, in variety of Quotations, and approv'd Expositions of Law, which you must pay for, like Apothecaries Bills, not according to the goodness of the Phisick, but the quantity of the Drugs; which you must discharge as well for doing you hurt, as if they had done you good? And truly, it very often happens, that all that a Client or a Patient gets of certainty, out of their Lawyers long Harangues, or their Apothecaries large Bills, is no more than what is Proverbial, *That Experience is good, if not bought too dear, but bad, when 'tis so.*

And now I have done this Subject of Registering Estates, to secure Purchasers against all bad Titles, and false Conveyances: Next, I think it will admit of no arguing, Which is the least writing, a Bill of Exchange on a Scrip of Paper, or a large Deed that fills up a Skin of Parchment? he that will not take my Word for it, had best try the Experiment, if he can find out any rational Man, that will believe

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These Propositions contradictory to Mathematical Demonstration.

But I must yield, that the happy Security of a Law of Registry, is rather to be hoped than expected; for really our Lawyers have so confounded and interwoven Settlements, having such a Knowledge of, if not a Concern and Interest in most Mens Estates, as they have so shuffled, linked, and riveted Estates together, that to introduce such a Law, Lawyers will tell us, would fill many Mens Minds with doubts and fears, and possibly these Kingdoms with Surprize and Amazement, by leaping so on a sudden, from one Change to another; and by an extraordinary new practised Law, Rout many old ones, which would be such a Goad in the Lawyers sides, as would make them muster up all their ends of Scripture-sayings, as, That were to put *new Wine in old Bottles*; and the Attornies would baul out, that were to sow *new Cloth on old Garments*: The Consequences thereof, all know.

But though 'tis not in my power to alter Mens Minds, so as to incline them to what is convenient and useful, yet I hope, I may mind them what is rational, and really well-worthy their Thoughts; which is to consider, how just a Judgment 'tis of Heaven, that since we value so little the Sin of breaking God's Laws, our Lawyers should punish us, by making us pay so dear for interpreting our own: And so I have done with this Law, and I wish for the publick Good, and Quiet of our Kingdoms, I had done with our Lawyers too; I do not at all mean, as to the banishing their Persons, but to the silencing the Abuses of some of their Practices.

And

And for my part, I confess, I had much rather employ my Pen, in writing never so dull a Discourse on their good Amendment, than be able to write a witty Character on their ill Lives, as Lawyers, but I pretend not to either; for they love Money too well, ever to endure the one, and my Pen is too dull, to present you with the other.

And therefore, my Discourse on Lawyers shall be very short and plain, which I'm sure is very unsuitable to their Law: And this my Opinion of them, you shall have very freely, for paying only the trouble of reading it, which I fear, when you have done, you'll say, it cost you more than 'tis worth.

I fancy, most Lawyers are generally of large Consciences, who require strong Lungs, but need little Courage; for they are the only happy, wise, and safe Warriors in this World; for they only fight with their Tongues, and those too, are made like Fencers Foils, who admit thrusting at one another, without any hurt, their fighting being only the Essays of Skill, not the Effects of Anger or Prejudice. Thus Lawyers fight dangerless, live at much Ease, and in great Plenty; and grow rich by others Troubles, as Chirurgeons do by others Hurts; few Lawyers using fighting Swords, not so much as that of the Spirit; never mustering themselves in any Troops, or scarce listing themselves in the Gospels Life-Guard; nor do I fancy, that some of them pretend to believe any Communion of Saints, comparable to the Communion, of their rich Clients during the Term.

Lawyers

Lawyers are the great Talkers of the long Robe, they thrive much, pray little, always fear'd, often courted, and ever well paid, let them deserve it never so ill; and still gaining by Civil Wars, never running any Risk in them, but still drawing an advantage by them, which side soever loseth; for all the Law-Game they play at, either with Plaintiff or Defendant, is, *Cross*, I win, *Pile*, you lose.

Lawyers are in our Kingdoms, like Trumpets and Drums in Armies, whose Employment is to encourage others to fight, but not to engage themselves; for that would be against *Magna Charta*, and the Fundamental Law of Self-preservation and Prudence, unless with the Weapons of their Tongues and Pens, with which they can make a shift to destroy great Estates, and thereby good Families, as well as Civil Wars: For doubtless, the Skirmishes of Lawyers with their long Bills, if they are not very desperate, I'm sure they are highly chargeable; and all the difference I can find, between a Suit of Law in the Courts, and a Duel in the Field, is but this, That the Trial of a Law-Suit, only reaches to the loss of one side, but the Sin of a Duel, certainly extends to both; each side, equally striving to take each others Life.

Truly, as Courage is a noble Vertue of our Nature, so ill employing it, is a Wickedness of our Mind; and I look upon it, as the Devil's Master-piece of Craft and Power, over Humane Nature, to make Men so commonly to offer their Lives, as a Sacrifice to this Idol of private Revenge, or publick Glory, and to employ their own Courage to destroy themselves:

Selves : But this is beside my Subject ; for Duelling Discourse has no more to do with Lawyers, than Lawyers have to do with Duelling ; and therefore, I shall have no more to do with it.

Lawyers are the Weather-Cocks of the Nation, and the very worst sort of them too ; for those on the top of Steeples and high Houses, turn with the first blast, and immediately inform us, to which Point of the Compass the Wind then bloweth : But for many of our Lawyers, though they are as nimble to turn as any Weather-Cock, on the first breath of a good Fee, yet they seldom tell truly, which Point of the Compass, either the Success, or the Danger of their Clients Cause bloweth, till after they have run them to the Expences of most of the costly Points of the Law ; and it very often happens, that their Clients Purses, as well as Patience, are quite tired, before they have got half way to the Journies end of their Law Progress ; for many Lawyers have found the Experiment, without the help of *Gresham-Colledg*, to make a slight Law-Suit to last as long as a tuff Buff-Coat, without producing any Certainty in it, but that of the great charge of it.

Lawyers are like Cannons, do but charge them well with good large Fees, and then plant them how you will, and against whom you please, and be but sure to prime them well with fresh Guineas, just when you fire them, and they will roar loud in the Court, and do great Execution against your Enemy, or at least, tell you so.

And this Comparison will yet reach farther, for Lawyers Cannon-like, will discharge but once,

once till they are new Laden, and Fee'd again; Fees being as absolutely necessary for carrying on a Law-suit, as Oars are in a Boat to Row against Tide : For as a Boat will not move longer forward, than stirred on by the repeated shoves of the Oars, which if never so little omitted, presently falls back :

So Lawyers move no farther in a Cause, than lured on by Fees, and fall off and decline their Cause, if they are not constantly edged on by fresh Fees.

And to make good the old Proverb, *That ill Weeds grow apace*, Lawyers are become as plenty, ( and I might have said, as troublesome, ) as Flies in the heat of Summer ; so that those that do not want Mony, need not fear want of Lawyers, nor possibly, of being brought to want by them.

'Twas the Custom till our Times, to make Lawyers first, and then out of them, Counsellors afterwards ; but now 'tis the Practice, often to make Counsellors first, and few to make themselves good Lawyers afterward, they being call'd to the Bar, according to the number of years they have lived, though not studied in the Inns, rather than the Quantity of Law they learn'd whilst they were there ; as Towns usually chuse their Burgessees for Parliament, sooner according to the large Bulk of their Estate, than the great measure of their Abilities, which is the real Cause, why not one Counsellor of ten, is a good Pleader at the Bar, nor one Parliament Man of as many, good Speakers in the House.

And for these Counsellors that are not Pleaders, whose Gowns only tell they are Lawyers, but their Tongues speak them not such ; though

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they

they prattle much for their Fees, yet they speak little for their Clients Cause: The Stream of Lawyers Tongues running usually like Rivers, the shallowest part still making the greatest Noise and fiercest Motion, whilst the deepest always runs the smoothest, and most silent: Young Lawyers Tongues, often slipping like the string of a Watch, which runs with more speed and noise than ten good Watches that go orderly and true; such violent Motions never telling that of the Sun, but only that of its own Disorder.

These young Fry of Country-Lawyers, tho' they take a Journey to the Courts every Term, yet most of their Business for going, is to be said to go; except such of them as are a Kin to the principal Judges of the Land, and perhaps by their Favour, made one of the King's Counsel, (though possibly, unable to advise well one of his meanest Subjects;) for though the King can make a Counsellor, he cannot a Lawyer; and then this King's Counsellor, and Judges Kinsman, must forsooth, be feed in every Cause, though you sacrifice to him your Mony, on no other account, than the *Indians* do to the Devil, that he may do them no harm; for good they expect none, except their Countenance and a favourable Approbation Nod; I say, excepting on this account, our young dull Lawyers are but the poor Gleaners of the Harvest-Reapers of the Terms, only picking up here and there a scattering Fee, which the great cryed-up Lawyers, had not time or conveniency to bind up.

But though I cannot say, most of our Lawyers make good Counsellors, yet I can safely say, That all Lawyers appear good Christians, in this one



one Point, ( indeed, I can name not many others ) of not letting the Sun go down in their Anger ; for they are so far from letting the Sun go down so, as they will not let their very Dinner, to shew that their bauling Anger is but from the Teeth outward ; and though the strength of their Clients Fees, raises such fierce blustering Storms on their Tongues, yet their Minds continue calm and undisturbed, like Tempests on the Sea, which only move the superficial part of the Water, whilst all under remains serene and quiet ; for as soon as the Court is up, their flashy Anger is down, and as the Curtin that drops at the end of the Play, it makes King and Subject, Master and Mistress, all one in an instant.

So as soon as the Comedy, or rather Farce of the Lawyers Pleading is over, and that the Plaintiff and Defendants Counsel have fought their Prize, and are got out of the Court into the Tavern, who can be greater Friends than they, and can railly more pleasantly, and talk more wittily ( as they think ) than themselves ? Then they can joyn issue to be really merry, and practice Essays in Brimmers ; for in them, Lawyers themselves can make no Deceit ; experimenting, who is Master of the strongest Brain in the Tavern, as well as they use to do, who has the ablest Tongue at the Bar, still paying the Reckoning out of their Clients Fees, and often raising their Mirth on the loss of their Clients Cause.

And for their Pride I need not name, since it may be seen in some, like that of *Diogenes*, through his torn Coat, it being usual for those to be highest in their own Conceit, that are low-

est in the Esteem of others ; the Reason is plain, others understand them, but they understand not themselves : The lightest Bodies swim still highest, and Merchants that are just upon breaking, talk more of their great Dealings and large Sums, than ever they did when they enjoy'd them ; nay, the very glorious Lamp of Heaven, the Sun, still seems largest when he is nearest to setting.

But how few are there, especially of the Lawyers brood, that imitate the *Pyramid*, who still lessens as he rises ? I remember I have seen a Counsellor at Law, for being only made a Judge for the few Days of an Assize, look more pufft up upon the Bench, than the Trumpeters Cheeks that sounded before him to it ; his looks being as full of great Pride, as his mind was empty of true Humility, or may be, his Head of good Law: And as he was no establish'd Judge of the Land, but only a Protempore one ; so many said he was but an Extempore Lawyer, one that studied more Fees than Law, and loved Law but for Fees, having only got some Heads of Pleadings by Rote, and some common places of Law by Practice, with which he looks big, and speaks loud, and gallops them over as briskly, as a Post-Horse does his Stage, but can well go no farther, and is very proud he can go so far.

But 'tis more than time to conclude this Discourse ; for though Lawyers are never weary of talking, (I mean, in case they are well fee'd) yet I am sure I am tir'd of writing of them ; and therefore, lest they should bring a Writ of Error against me, for writing so much Truth against them, I will sound a Retreat, and draw

off

off my Pen from this Subject, for fear the Lawyers should produce some old moldy Statute, to back the old Proverb, *That Truths are not to be spoken at all times*, nor of Lawyers of all Men.

And now to sum up my whole and real Opinion of them, and my friendly Advice to you concerning them, 'tis in short this, That you are not to condemn the whole Society of Lawyers, because that would be unwise to censure and distrust all of them, when certainly there are some of them very good; and on the other Hand, 'tis unreasonable as well as unsafe to trust all, because 'tis most certain, that many of them are very bad; therefore our wisest way, will be to live so well, and purchase so sure, and by carrying our selves religiously to our God, and civilly and peaceably to our Neighbours, as not to need fear the Lawyers Tongues, nor want their Counsel.

But since the nature of our quarreling Age will force us to need Lawyers, let us use them as we do Chirurgeons, only when we have need, and not be perswaded by them to Law, when we have no need.

And now as my Discourse of Lawyers is at an end, so is my Quarrel to all Lawyers; for as they wrangle fiercely against one another in Court, and yet are dear Friends the minute they are out of it; so though I have writ sharply against them, 'twas meerly for my Pastime, not at all my Hatred; for I esteem many of them very much, and love some of them very well; therefore, as Lawyers are still good Friends as soon as the Court is up, so I desire to continue such to them, now my Discourse is done.

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The EIGHTH  
DISCOURSE,

*Of the wicked Folly of such Atheistical Young Men, as fancy it a part of fine modish Wit, to Railly at Religion and Scripture.*

I Know not which would be the greater Folly, to teach you for a Maxim, That 'tis still Day when the Sun shines, or to tell you for News, That *England* swarms with Legions of Atheistical Gospel-Railers; for there's no vertuous pious Person that keeps company with the young debauch'd Sparks of our Time, but must have his Ears furr'd, if not his Heart wounded with their profane Discourses, and blasphemous Oaths; (much fitter to be answer'd by a Thunderbolt, than my dull Pen,) which kinds of speaking, are not the whisper'd Lectures of Atheistical Conventicles, private Juncto's, or close Cabals, but are proclaim'd and maintain'd, in the common and publick Coffee-Houses, by numbers of the Atheistical Tribe; who not only with *Ezekiel's* Reprobates, turn their Backs to the Temple of the Lord, but they do their utmost to defie, and declare War with the Almighty, by discharging  
such

such Vollies of Oaths, as if they hoped to make the Kingdom of Heaven to suffer Violence.

These Atheistical mad Men, (for all Atheists are such,) being all over profane, as well in their Actions, as in their Heart and Tongues, have set up such a *Bedlam* species of Religion, as exactly traces the Heresie of the *Nicolaitans*; a Doctrin that taught the necessity of Lust, and the pleasure of Fornication; so that sure these Mens Religions (I shou'd have rather said, Follies,) are but like *Solomon's* Fools Laughter, which he stiles Madness; for they run on with full cry, and rage, and hunt in Counter-Discipline to our blessed Saviour's Gospel, which they do not Read, but Ransack, not designing to Profit by it, but only to jeer at it.

There goes an old Story, That Her Majesty the Queen Mother, was pleased to shew that excellent Poet Mr. *Edward Waller*, several Copies of *French* Verses which Her Majesty thought very ingenious, but Mr. *Waller* could not; at last She shew'd him another Copy, and said, *They were the best Verses She ever read in French*; but our *English* Poet, instead of praising them, fell upon extolling himself, (or at least, the *English* Muse before the *French*,) and told Her Majesty, *That he would learn French perfectly, that She might once read good Verses in her own Language*: If this was look'd upon as a vain Expression in a rare Poet, who to heighten and inflame his Poetical Fancies, must deal much in Fiction; how vast a Wickedness ought we to esteem it in an Atheist, who only reads God's sacred Word, that he might learn to blaspheme him in his own Language?

'Tis these sort of Wretches that call the Prophet a Fool, and the Spiritual Man Mad, and who like the unjust Judge in the Gospel, *neither fear God, nor regard Man*, these Satyrists turning all Religion into Redicule, and all Scripture to Romance ; and so as St. Peter says, *wresting all Scripture to their own destruction*.

But before I make any farther progress on this subject, I think 'twill be convenient to acquaint you what I intend by Scripture ; I mean by Scripture, that part of Gods Sacred Word that is not wrapt up in mysterious obscurity, or that is not heightened with Tropes and Figures, or covered with Allegories which render it profound in the matter, and intricate in the manner, how the several parts of Scripture have been expounded according to the many different Explications, Interpretations, Senses and Opinions, which are but so many degrees and arguments of Mans fallibility in finding out the truth of them.

But I mean by Scripture, only that part of Gods Word that is clear, plain, fundamental and necessary to Salvation, which all good Christians are required as such, to Read, Believe and Follow as a rule of their Faith, and a guide to their actions, it being most certain, that all that part of Scripture that contains the Rules and Articles of our Christian Faith, are clearly and plainly set down as such, without Trope or Figure, and so manifestly Legible, that no Rational Man can justly pretend to be so ignorant as not to find enough there for a foundation of his true Faith, for the instruction of a holy Life, for the reproof of his sinful Deeds, for an ample reward of his Pious and Charitable Actions. In a word, to afford

afford him satisfaction and comfort in this life, and to secure him eternal Salvation in the next; Gods great Justice, Mercy and Goodness having obliged him to leave that part of his Sacred Word which contains what is truly necessary to a right Faith, and a good Life, to be very plain and unmysterious, and so to preserve it from corruption or alteration, which we are still bound to observe and follow, as absolutely necessary to Salvation; for if they had not been always so kept, God would never have commanded them as still necessary for us to observe.

In short, my belief is, that there is no other Foundation for a Christian to build his faith and dependency on, than what is recorded in our Saviours holy Gospel; for I really believe God does not, and therefore Man ought not to require of any Man more than this, To believe the holy Scripture to be the Word of God, and to use his best endeavours to find out the true sense of it, and to live to his utmost according to it; for 'tis not required of us as Men, to be free from error, for then we should be more than Men, but that we do our very best to avoid it, error being as well a Disease in our natures, as a failure in our actions, the universal fallibility of Humane Nature rendring it not only possible that Men should err, but impossible that Men should do otherways; and therefore 'tis an infallible rule in Reason, That what is impossible to be done, can never be necessary for us to do.

Indeed our great *Protestant* Champion, Master *Chillingworth*, says very well of Scripture, *That nothing can challenge our belief in point of Salvation, but what has descended to us from our Blessed Saviour or his Apostles, by original and universal Tradition;*

now nothing but Scripture hath thus descended, therefore nothing but Scripture (or clear deductions from it) can challenge our belief in matters of Salvation. And since it cannot be denied, but that Christs Gospel contains all things necessary to our Salvation, there needs no great Logick to prove and extract this undeniable consequence, that if all things necessary to our Salvation be there, by believing all that is there, I must believe all that is necessary.

So that it being most certain, that Scripture is given us by the Divine Spirit, as a compleat, fixed and immutable rule to direct our Faith, and govern our Actions by, they who despise it, despise God himself; as Christ said they did him, that did his Disciples Preaching, *Luke 16.*

Let us therefore seriously consider, how irrational and strangely profane must the Vitioso's of our Times be, that disown all Scripture authority, to avoid following any precepts of the Gospel, that make it all their Religion to have none at all; who are so far from serving God, as they will but very faintly, if at all, allow there is a God to serve. But yet let the Atheist as profane as he is; or can be, let him say what he will, and do what he can, there is so powerful an impulse and impression stamp'd in his Humane Nature of the Being of a God, that even those very Persons whose guilty terrors of Conscience may tempt them to wish there was no God, cannot get the assent of mind to believe that there is none.

And some of these Atheists (as common Fame and Reports go,) have been so wicked as to say of Sacred Writ, what the Profane *Alphonso* King of *Portugal* said as to the making of the World,

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World, That if God had advised with him about  
 it, he should have prevented many defects in the work  
 of its Creation ; as if the King of Kings needed  
 any Counsellor, where is all Infinite Wisdom,  
 Goodness and Power from all Eternity ; and he  
 who sees the remotest conclusions, in their very  
 first principles, sure must know best how to or-  
 der all things, since they must be best because he  
 orders them : For as our Blessed Saviour says,  
*Man has not the power to make one Hair white or  
 black ;* such a frail Creature is Man, that as holy  
 David says, *When it pleaseth God to take away his  
 Breath, he dyes, and turns again to his Dust.*

There are other Atheists of the same Drove  
 and Kingdom of Darkness, that fancy they can  
 oppose the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour, by  
 his Sleeping in the Storm, arguing, that a Deity  
 is not capable of it ; but in shewing their great  
 Malice, they shew their great folly, in not con-  
 sidering that Christ was both God and Man, and  
 that he acted there as both ; for though he slept  
 as a Man, yet he shewed the miraculous power of  
 a God, by commanding the enraged Wind and  
 Seas into a Calm, which sure the very Atheists  
 themselves, ( though never so wickedly Pro-  
 fane ) cannot yet be so impudently Foolish as  
 to deny its being an act so supernatural and won-  
 derful, as nothing less than a Divine and Al-  
 mighty Power could have effected it ; for sure  
 none can command operations contrary to the  
 Universal Law of Nature, prescribed from the  
 beginning of time and things, but the Author of  
 it and them, the Son of God, and Lord of Na-  
 ture.

But these Atheists are like the *Jews* who would  
 not believe Christs Gospel by his Miracles, be-  
 cause

cause they did not fancy his Doctrin ; and indeed the Devil has so yoa'k'd the Atheist and Jew together in their unreasonable, as well as unchristian doubts concerning our Blessed Saviours coming into the World, as 'tis a hard measuring cast which is the most Devilish opinion of the Two, the Jews that believe the Messiah is not yet come, or the Atheist that cares not whether he ever did, or will come ; the one that denies him, the other that will not know him.

Really I cannot tell what ought to be done with these numberless droves of Prophane Wretches, who will neither believe Gods Sacred Word, nor mind the checks of their own Consciences, being greater Hereticks than the very *Gnosticks*, who believ'd it no matter how ill Men lived, so their Faith was but good ; but these Atheists will neither live well, nor believe so.

But thus much sure they ought to suffer, and what I wish the Magistracy would inflict on them, which is to cause such as are of these Pestilential Opinions, to have their Houses shut up, with a red Cross on their Doors, to keep off all sound Believers from their infection ; for certainly neither Law nor Judge ought at all to spare those Creatures, who will not at all spare their own Creator.

The loose freedoms of Vice, and the strict rules of Vertue, enter into the Mind as Pains and Pleasures do into the Body, where there are but few parts capable of delight, but all sensible of pain ; so that Vice enters more ways into wicked Mens minds, than Vertue and Piety, and finds more freedom and room to make its impression, and to disperse its venomous infection ; which Truth occasions that we daily see the frequent acts  
of

of many Vices for one Vertue, and meet Ten Debauch'd Men, for one truly Pious Person.

The Apostle commands us to avoid an Heretick, which is in common Scripture sense, an Impious Person; and certainly Atheists are not only Hereticks to one Opinion and Church, but they are by whole-sale to all Vertue and Piety, who breath nothing but Contagion, and whose Profanenefs is able to infect not only single Men, but whole Societies: And all know 'tis but customary in times of great Infection, to use strict care to preserve the sound, as well as to give good Medicines to cure the Sick, it being as well a part of Prudence to avoid what's ill, as to choose what's good.

And if after all, the Atheists must be admitted abroad into Company; 'tis a Thousand pities they are not all bound to wear Red Hats, as the Jews do in *Italy*, to distinguish them from the Christians.

O what a sad and strange Age do we live in, that we poor Earth-worms, whose foundation is as *Job* says, *in the Dust*, and our Spirit breath'd into us by God, should dare to vie with, and mock at the Divine Oracles of the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords!

Sure this must be a presumptuous folly, far greater than if an Ant should boast himself fitter to support the Sphears than an *Atlas*; or that a Man should undertake with a Thimble, to bring together such a Mountainous heap of Earth, as should outlarge and overtop the highest *Alps*; when indeed the very richest dress of Worldly Knowledge that the most wise *Solomon* on Earth can boast of, or pretend to be adorned with, if compared to the glory of his Maker, is as the

*Porpher*

*Prophet says, but filthy Rags: And if the eyes of his understanding were opened, he would certainly appear to himself but just as Adam did in the Garden, ashamed of his own Nakedness in the sight of God, and would then say with Job, Now mine Eyes see thee, I abhor my self, and repent in Dust and Ashes.*

Surely then the Despisers of Gods Sacred Word, which is as exactly fitted for our Souls good, as our Members are for our Bodies use, where 'tis impossible to add any but what would be very needless, or to take away any that are not highly necessary, are some of those the Scripture mentions, *who have Eyes and see not; (I am sure,)* if they have any, they see little, and reason less, and do not consider at all, at least to any purpose; for if they did, 'twere impossible but these reflections must eccho in their Ears, and rebound on their Consciences, in the black Characters of Folly, Pride and Ingratitude; for speaking evil of things, they do not understand as they ought, nor reverence as they should.

And there are others of the same set, that pretend to pick a quarrel with Scripture, because there are many things in it so dark, as they do not well comprehend; when in plain truth, their exceptions are but against those clear places they do.

These Atheistical Vermine of Men, look on the Gospel, just as a sort of Vermine call'd *Moles*, do on the Sun, who only make use of their Eyes to avoid seeing it, for they cannot endure it's brightness, but hate its Light: And just so do the Atheists abhor the Gospels purity, rallying it, and despising all but the wicked Brood and Society of their own Profane, Devilish Opinions,  
loving

loving only those of their Fraternity, the Children of the Father of Lyes, and hating all others. Which minds me of a Story of a great Miser, which if not near a kin, yet 'tis at least dependent on that Wicked Tribe.

The Story is of a rich miserable Miser, (for all Misers must be miserable, what with their eager and ravenous care of getting, or of their anxious fear and trouble of losing what they have got, which thoughtful cares equally working on their Spirits, serve to keep their minds in a continual uneasy restlessness.) This Miser would never lend a Farthing to help the necessity of his Friends, (hardly his own,) or to relieve the wants of his Neighbours, nor to give the Poor at his Door so much as *Lazarus's* Portion, the Crumbs that fell from his Table, but rak'd up all his Wealth for his Children, making himself the meer Conduit Pipe of his own stream of Riches, conveying all to their use, but never retaining any to his own; this was his Folly and Sin of not Piously distributing them, which the *Apostle* calls Covetousness, which is the Root of all evil; when Charity is such a blest Spreading Tree, that it shades many Faults.

Now this Earth-worm Miser, when he departed this World, having no better hopes at his Death, than that of saving Charges by it, ordered that his Body should be close wrapt up in a large Sheet of Lead, and so Buried; and many wondering at the reason that he should lay out more Money than he needed on his Body, after his Death, when he never did so much as was necessary for it during his Life, a witty Acquaintance of his, told them the reason was, that he designed his Body after his Death should resemble

semble his Mind whilst he was living ; and therefore, he ordered himself to be wrapt up close in Lead, that so he might be sure to feed only the Vermin of his own Breed ; and that as his Charity never lived out of his own House, so he resolv'd, it should be buried with him in the same Coffin, to be there confin'd, like a Circle, that unites in its self, both its beginning and end.

And truly I heartily wish, that all the profane Opinions of the Atheists, and all the covetous Desires of the Misers, were buried with him in his Leaden Coffin, and there to Rot in perpetual Forgetfulness, as well as they Lived in deserved Infamy, till there be a total Consummation, both of their Bodies and Memories ; and that their Posterities might enjoy Pious Souls and Liberal Hearts ; but till then, we are only bound to give them much of our Pity, as we are good Christians, but not the least of our Imitation, if we intend to be so.

But now having stray'd out of the Road of my design'd Discourse, I must return into it again, where I can safely say, that there is no true considering Christian, but must esteem it a monstrous Folly in the most knowing Person now on Earth, so to Idolize his own vain worldly Wisdom, as to slight and railly at the true Heavenly One, ( I mean, the Doctrin of the Holy Scriptures, ) which is to make themselves, if possible, worse Devils on Earth, than the very Devils in Hell, for they believed and trembled : But the pretended Atheist, ( for I believe there's no such real Man, ) cannot but believe, that there is a Heaven and a Hell, though indeed he lives, as if he neither credited the one, nor fear'd the other. God

God inspir'd the blessed Apostles and Evangelists to Preach our Saviours Gospel, and strengthened them Martyrs to die in Confirmation of its Truth; nay, he made the very Elements to proclaim our Saviour's Godhead, in obeying his Commands, by changing a Storm into a Calm; yet this Man, (I should rather say Beast,) call'd an Atheist, whose Body is composed of the four Elements, will rather serve the Devil, than obey his own Maker; and there let us e'en leave the Atheist with his Master, being a Master only fit for such a Servant, and he a Servant only fit for such a Master.

'Tis most certain, that God's Holy Word, the Scriptures, are heavenly and excellent; and 'tis as certain, that since nothing but what's perfectly Pious, Vertuous and Good, can proceed from an All-pure and Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, it must necessarily, as an undeniable Consequence, be our best and highest Prudence; as to our Salvation, to read and follow that, which instructs and guides us to the obtaining of it; for 'tis as impossible to know God's Will, but by his Word, as 'tis to see the Sun by any Light but his own.

And therefore, since following God's Holy Word, is the only true, visible, heavenly Conductor to the performance of his Will, it must necessarily be our best and highest Wisdom; (and indeed, our only true saving one,) to be ruled by it; for the Word of God, is the true Soul-Elixir and heavenly Guide, that will embellish and enrich our Spirits with that pure and eternal Felicity, that will be sure to bring us Peace, both whilst we are in, and when we are going out of this Life; and far out-shine

all the false Opticks the Devil can lend the Atheists, either to magnifie their own conceited Perfections, or to gloss their own favorite Sensualities, and vain Aÿtings, which can never afford a good Conscience, and Peace at the last; for as soon as we come seriously to contemplate, and to judge of things by pure Truth, then we shall own this as a most certain Rule, That a false Judgment can never furnish a Truth, which it self wants; and therefore, no sober wise Person will believe Self-Interest, nor flattering Tongues, ascribe to them Excellencies they have not, before their own knowledge of what they have; there's no gathering Grapes out of the Thistles of Flattery, for they, like small Atoms of Load-Stones, can attract nothing of Weight, except the heavy Sense of our sinful Folly, and woful Concern of being deceiv'd, and cast away by them; whereas, those that drop their Anchor of Faith and Hope on our blessed Saviour, need fear no Shipwreck, since the Winds and Seas obey'd him.

Certainly, it may be religiously said of reading the Holy Scriptures, what a Poet once complementally writ of Mens looking on Beautiful Women, *That they are like clear bright Summer days, none can behold their Brightness, without partaking of their Heat.*

If looking on-the Creatures outward fading Beauty, produces such inward Effects, what must it be to behold the Brightness of our Creator, in all his glorious Majesty? We have in Scripture, a Glimpse and short Emblem of it, Pictur'd in the Book of *Exodus*, where it is said, *That Moses having received the Law from God,*



God, after his forty Days Conversation with him in Mount Sinai, his Face shone with a Brightness that dazzled all the Beholders.

Though we cannot go to Mount Sinai with Moses, and obtain such a Brightness now, as he had then, yet, we may both daily and hourly converse with our God in his sacred Word: And I am sure, a truly Pious Christian, that beholds with true Devotion, the bright Divine Style, and Heavenly Promises of our Blessed Saviour's Gospel, cannot but be enflam'd with a true heat of Zeal, to create such an awful Reverence for it, that he must necessarily pay a due Obedience to it; 'twill fix such a fair and heavenly Brightness on Life and Conversation, as will dazzle all Atheistical Beholders, and Gospel Despisers.

And now I have finished my Thoughts on this Subject, and have here (though but slightly) writ against the Despisers and Mockers of God's sacred Word, and of the wicked Folly and sinful Dangers of an Atheistical Life: But now let us I pray, advance a little farther, and reflect on the fearful Condition that one of these must needs be in, when he lies gasping for Life on his Death-Bed, past all hopes of a Reprieve; and that his Sickness has mortified all his Lusts, and unmask'd and thrown off, the numberless Disguises of all his worldly Vanities and earthly Pleasures, and that he beholds like St. Stephen, the Heavens open, and there sees Piety and Vertue, he so slighted, shining above in all their bright Oriental Colours, and looks on all his darling Vices and Sins, hanging down their Heads, and blushing at their own vile Deformity; for, when once his Mind is

(as I may say,) thereby clarified, and clearly drawn off from the Lees and Dregs of all worldly Vanities and Sensualities, and that he comes to pure and serious Reflections of Heaven and Eternity, then will he be amazed and frightened, at his own sinful and monstrous Folly, for having been so long deceived by those vain Delusions and Atheistical Opinions, that seduced and misled him to be a Nonconformist to God's sacred Word, which was the only Treasury of Divine Truths; The only Conveyance of our Spiritual Lives and Immortality; The Standard of the Catholick Faith, and *Magna Charta* of our Heavenly Inheritance.

But in regard I hear some able learned Authors have writ on this Subject, whose great Abilities may be able to edifie your Knowledge; I shall therefore end this Discourse, and make it my desire to all such as have Reason to argue, and Souls they desire to save, and fear to lose, that they will seriously consider, Whether there can be in Nature, a greater Prodigy of Folly and Wickedness, in any Man, than to turn God's sacred Word of Salvation, to the Pastime Work of his own Damnation, by condemning and rallying at that he must one Day be judged by, and making that his Jest, which he may be damn'd for in earnest? for God will not be mocked; and the danger of Hell, is of the Nature of other dangers, and the very worst sort of them too; for if you read the wise Man, he will tell you, *That he who seeks Danger, shall perish in it.* In a Word, He that wants the Grace of believing a Hell in this Life, is very unlikely to escape the sad Experience, of meeting one in the next.

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## DISCOURSE,

*Of the great Danger and common Practice of many, who defer the Thoughts of the other World, till they are just going out of this.*

**S**olomon, when he had advanc'd his Knowledge, and improv'd his Experience, by furrounding the chief Varieties of this World, and by acting a main Part, as well in the changeable, as in the most delightful Scenes of it, and that, not only by serious Contemplation, but experimental Essays; so that he who deservedly attain'd to that highly Illustrious Title, of the most Wise among Men, makes this short Epilogue to that large Play, and all the Variety of Scenes he was an Actor in, on this Worlds Stage: and Records it, not only as a wise Man's Saying, but a Scripture Truth, *That the end of all worldly Pleasures, is but Vanity and vexation of Spirit.*

But though this is a Truth that none can justly deny, yet 'tis a Truth that few will seriously consider; the eager Pursuit of our sensual Pleasures and worldly Concerns, does so interpose, as it makes us defer those Religious Thoughts,

to be only sigh'd out with our just dying Breath, in which last Moment, we have only Time to beg to save our Lives, but not to practise Amendment of them; and finding our selves just a sinking, we can only cry out with St. Peter, *Save, Lord, or we perish*: And indeed, such a Repentance is usually but meer Words of Course, spoken more out of an apprehension of present Death, than any real Design of a future Reformation of Life.

Thus we commonly use Repentance, but as a gasping Cordial, which ought to be every good Christians daily Diet, and which we are bound to pray for with the same earnestness, because we have the same need, as of our *Daily Bread*: And we may be all sure, that the sooner 'tis ask'd, the easier 'twill be granted; for they that seek God early, will be sure to find him: And therefore, though a Death-bed Repentance hath now got the Custom from all other Times, yet of all Times, 'tis the very worst, being but a kind of Praying, as they read *Hebrew*, that is, backward, beginning at the end; by thanking of God only at the very finishing part of our old Age, when we are commanded to *remember our Creator in the days of our Youth*.

But instead of remembring to fly to that strong City of Refuge, and of being sure to keep to the Harbor of Security, where we have God's Promise, *That at what time soever, a Sinner doth repent him of his Sins, they shall be remitted*; we all skip over and forget the strictness of the Condition belonging to that Promise, and consider not that Work that must be performed with the deepest Relenting, and Sorrow of our Hearts; we are to sound the Depth, and to allow

allow Time to Dive, that we may bring up a Repentance from the very bottom of our Hearts.

We all depend on the Merits of Christ, and believe God can deny us nothing, because he gave us his Son ; we are all as ready to remember that, as we are willing to forget this, that he is our Judge, as well as our Saviour ; and that therefore, we ought as well to fear him because he is just, as to trust in him, because he is merciful.

We ought also to consider, That the inward Conversion of our Hearts, is not in our Power to be effected, without the assistance of Divine Grace ; and 'tis therefore, both an Irrational and a Disingenuous way of Proceeding, to think to obtain God's Mercy and Favour, just at our Death, when we slight his Commandments all our Life. Alas ! What can we then hope for, when we have no Time left, and owe for all that's past ?

Single desires of Vertue are indeed good in themselves, and commendable ; but our evil Habits of Sin, are not to be blown away with our last departing Sighs ; but as our Saviour said, *Such Devils are to be cast out by Fasting and Prayer*, by using constant Repentance, and by abstaining from wicked Practices, such as feed our vicious Appetites, or evil Inclinations ; therefore, we must use frequent and fervent Prayer to our good God, to bless and increase our endeavours, in the ways of Vertue and Piety.

I esteem Repentance to contain chiefly this double Advantage, first, as 'tis instrumental to our receiving of Divine Mercy, and Pardon for the time past : And next, 'tis a strong Prefer-

vative and Antidote against Sin, for the time to come; for none truly repent of past Sins, that do not as well abstain from, as resolve against acting the same for the future, which a Death-Bed Repentance must needs render unpracticable.

Truly most of us cosen our selves, in mistaking the true Nature of Repentance, because we will have it to be only a sorrow for Sin, ( so apt we are to believe what we desire; ) and sorrow for Sin, is certainly a main part of Repentance, that there can be no true Repentance without it; but yet, that barely and singly, without future Purity and Reformation of Life, is but such an one as the very damned in Hell use; for doubtless they cannot but be sorry for the Sins that occasion their being there, and the thoughts of the Happiness they might have enjoy'd, makes up a main part of the Torments they now suffer: Sorrow for Sin, is the Tree Repentance grows on; but the Fruit of it, is Amendment of Life, Purity of Heart, and a constant Regulating of our Wills, Affections and Actions, according to God's Commandments; and therefore, those that will defer their Repentance to the very last, and then think to sigh away their Sins, and gain Heaven for only crying out, *Lord, Lord*, may act according to their Hopes, but I'm sure, not according to God's Word, which says, *That not every Hypocrite, who cryeth Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Our Death-Bed is a very proper Place, and fitting Time to continue, enlarge, and inflame our Repentance, but doubtless, a very unfit and unsafe Time to begin, where we should just end. In short, the true Reason we do not think

think it necessary in our Health, to amend and repent of our evil ways, is, because that during Life, we never afford our selves time to think of, and account for what we do amiss, or so much as seriously to reflect on God's great Mercies to us, or our high Transgressions against him; but still like *Felix*, we are desirous to put it off to a more convenient Season, which most commonly is the last Hour of our Life, because the farthest off: when all Christians ought to act in the means of Repentance, as 'tis reported, that *Cesar* did in the ways of War, which was never to lose a Moments Time, in an occasion where a speedy Execution might be advantageous, and a little Delay prejudicial; that is, in matter of War, he would never remit that to the next Day, which he might have acted the same Day.

Therefore, as by the Rule of Reason, because Death is certain, we ought not to fear it; so by the like Consequence, because Death's coming is uncertain, we ought still to expect it, and prepare against the approach of it; but indeed we are all so foolish, as to be still striving to live long, which is not in our power, and not to live well, which is; and like our Father *Adam*, we only mind the things of this World, not the next; and therefore, he that advises us to look into our own Condition, and see our sad State, ( which we must see, if we truly see our own Condition, and grow acquainted with our selves, ) is really a good and faithful Friend.

But now I dare not say, that 'tis impossible, that a Repentance deferred to the very last Hour, cannot prevail; because Mens Sins are Finite, but God's Mercy is Infinite, and over  
all

all his Works; and therefore, 'twere to have too mean an Opinion of God's Power, that because he has appointed us Laws to follow, as a means to Salvation, that therefore, he has confined his Power and Mercy to those very means; God that Intail'd Sin on all *Adam's* Posterity, without any act of ours, may through the Merit and Death of our Blessed Saviour, also save us, without any help or act of ours, if he pleas'd so to do. But truly, 'tis a very desperate and irrational manner of arguing, to depend and conclude, That because the Almighty can do what he will with us, that therefore, he will do what he can for us; our Saviour does not use extraordinary means, when ordinary will serve; for though he could have preserved his Disciples Lives by Miracles, yet he orders them, if they be persecuted in one City to fly to another.

The Scripture tells us of one that was saved, though he did not repent till the very last Hour of his Life, which was the *Thief* upon the *Cross*, to keep Men from Despair; and that there was never but that one, to keep us from Presumption. But let none of us dare to defer our Repentance to the last Hour, in a Confidence of that one Example, and so hope, by repenting as he did, to be saved as he was, since we want that Excuse now, which he really had then; nor have we God's Promise so to save us, nor the Thiefs Reasons so to justifie us; for he knew not that Christ was the true Christ, till that very time of his suffering; and as soon as he did know it, he believ'd and repented, which was as soon as he was born (as I may say,) a Christian; but all Christians  
know



have know all their Life-time, Christ to be the true  
 be- Christ; and yet we will not call upon him by  
 as a Repentance, till the hour of our Death: And  
 con- sure a never so short liv'd Christian that dies  
 ans; well, is preferable before a never so long a  
 rity, liv'd Christian that lives ill.  
 Me-

Indeed if we could but perswade our selves  
 seriously to reflect, and strictly to search into the  
 sad Estate of our Lives, and the short time we  
 have to sit and prepare our selves for Death, and  
 to intitle us to Everlasting Life, we should still  
 carry in our thoughts, and practise in our  
 actions, that most useful Memorandum of the A-  
 postle, *'Tis appointed for every Man once to dye, and  
 that after Death comes Judgment*; and we must all  
 dye, for Death must come to all, it being ac-  
 cording to the course of Nature, and Rules of  
 Providence.

Next 'tis well worthy our consideration, that  
 as Death will come certainly, so it may seize us  
 accidentally by a Thousand several chances, as  
 the Weekly Bills of Mortality afford us daily,  
 but too many sad Advertisements; for there is  
 no Age, Condition, Quality or Place in the whole  
 World, that can justly pretend a Protection a-  
 gainst it; Death visits as well Princes Palaces,  
 as Poor Mens Cottages; Death like the Air, will  
 be in all Places, lock your Doors never so strong,  
 and shut your Windows never so close; and  
 therefore our Folly must be very great, if we  
 hope to avoid what's unavoidable.

But I cannot believe any one is so great a Fool  
 as to hope to escape Death for ever; but only  
 thinks to put it off for some time, but never  
 considers that the torment of the daily fears is  
 certain, but all the Essays of Prolonging Life are  
 doubt-

doubtful, and that the very fear of Death has made many dye, that might probably have lived longer, if it had not been for that fear ; for as St. *Austin* says very well, *All Men had rather endure Torment to avoid Death, than endure Death to avoid Torment, and yet most commonly they endure both Pain and Death together ; nay, and sometimes they meet their Death in the very Torment they suffer, as a means to save their Lives : And at very best, after we have indured a great deal of Pain and Misery to get our selves cured of such diseases as we are infected with, yet we must be forced at last to yield up our Lives, for they cannot last always, because they are always Mortal, nor can our Lives last very long, because by the course of Nature they are to be but short ; nor can we so much as say before-hand, that we have any time, though never so short, as certain, because our Lives are never but uncertain.* Therefore since we are assured, that Death will both meet and assault us, we ought to Arm our selves by a careful and timely preparation against it at all times.

I am confident, if we did but propose to our selves this plain Question, What we would think of such Persons in a Man of War, that should out of Carelesness or forgetfulness leave their great Guns and Ammunition behind them ashoar, though they lay exposed to their sight, and ready for their use, and yet should set to Sea without them, in confidence of not meeting their Enemy ; and when he was falling on, and just ready to seize them, then in that great confusion and hurry, to be wishing and praying for their great Guns in their Ship, and their Ammunition in their Store, and so for want of them, be forced to yield to their Enemy, without an ability of making the least resistance ? Would we not conclude,

clude, that they deserve to be taken for Fools, as well as Prisoners? I am sure we must.

Therefore since we cannot but yield that, pray let us consider this, that certainly our Loss must be much more, and our folly far greater, in the surprize of our Spiritual concerns; and therefore being assured of the danger of meeting Death in every place, we ought to prepare against him in all places, and at all times, and in all conditions, and not to leave behind us our Spiritual Ammunition, of Piety, Charity, Humility, Purity of Life, and Sincerity in our Repentance, by a daily asking Pardon for our daily Sins; for such constant fervent Prayers, are the true Battering Pieces, which will be sure to open a way for our Souls to the Throne of Mercy.

But if we neglect shifting these Duties on our Consciences, and in our Practices, till the hour that our cruel Enemy, unprepared Death, assaults and seizes us, we are just so much worse Prisoners, and greater Fools, than those careless Sea-men; as the Eternal Loss of our Souls, is more grievous than a short Imprisonment of our Bodies; or to fall into the power of Satan, than into the hands of Men.

And as a Death-Bed Repentance, is such a sad kind of one, as it has little or no vertue appropriated to it by any Gospel-promise, and so is not to be deferred or depended on at that time, so there is another sort of Repentance, which though less ill, is far from being sufficiently good; which is now and then upon the account of hearing some Religious Discourse, or beholding some Mortifying Object or the like, to cast out a Sigh or two for our Sins, but still  
keeping

keeping the design of acting the same Sins over again, as God knows too many of us do ; I say such Sighs are more apt to cool than inflame, to blast our Repentance, than blow away our Sins ; for such Slight, Airy Purifications, can never cleanse and remove deep rooted Pollutions ; for Repentance is of so very nice and tender a quality, as 'tis quenched by the least continuing darling Sin, and like Fire, it soon goes out, if not often recruited, stirred up, and mended ; Repentance being of such a pure nature, as none must pretend to gain more advantage by it, but proportionable to the real intentions they bring to it.

We generally desire a real Repentance, and a pious end, just as we do Old Age, which we all heartily desire to attain, but really fear to approach : And indeed 'tis a Divinity fitly calculated for our Meridian, and suits well with our Debauch'd Age, and Lazy Humours, to say we love God, but how few of us do strive to keep his Commandments ; which St. John tell us, is *the only true Product of our loving him, and which ought to be as inseparable from it, as Light is from the Sun.*

A true Lover of Gods Commands, is still a saying with St. Paul, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?* nothing can be too hard for him to undertake, nothing too terrible to act, nothing too miserable to suffer ; for indeed there is nothing which a true Lover of Gods Commands will not endeavour to perform and resolve to endure in his obedience to them ; and therefore we may safely conclude, that none of us are so good as we should be, that cannot endure what we ought to do : But indeed we are only willing and  
active

active to receive the Rewards of Holiness, but dull and averse in either suffering the Severities, or performing the Duties of it ; we all like well the Inheritance of Gods Sons , but hate to do the work of his Servants.

God has promised to all truly Pious Christians, a Crown of Righteousness, yet so, if we want the Righteousness, we must not expect the Crown ; and therefore 'tis in vain for us to pretend to the former, unless we use all pious endeavours to obtain the latter : And to convince our selves of this great truth, we need but strictly observe how the Apostle explaineth, *That the Grace of God bringeth Salvation to us, by denying Worldly Lusts, and living Godly, Soberly and Righteously in this present World.* And indeed if we Read over all Gospel Promises for the Remission of Sins, we shall find them all conjunctive, and interwoven with the duty of Repentance ; Pardon for Sins being no single, but a conditional Promise, *Except we Repent, we cannot be Saved.*

O strange Prodigy of Folly and Impiety, in so much loving and over-valuing this our Momentary Life, and so slighting and contemning our Everlasting Felicity ! Can we forget, or dare we deny, that 'tis God who gives us our Life, and time of Living here ? And if we grant thus much of Gods Mercy to us, let us reflect a little on our sinful and ungrateful returns to him, and our disingenuous as well as impious dealing with our selves ; and pray let us take along with us this short slight Idea of our present unreasonable manner of proceedings in the means of gaining Heaven.

There is no wicked Wretch surely so highly profane, and blockedly stupid, as to deny and disown

disown, That an Eternity of Felicity belongs to Heaven only, and that the Happiness and Pleasures of this World are uncertain, because our Lives they depend on are so: This being granted, which sure cannot be denied, let our next Consideration be, Whether we place an equal Value and Esteem on both, according to their true Measures and Values, as they are considerable to us; that is, whether we contemplate as we ought, the vast difference between an Eternity of Felicity in Heaven, and the short fading Enjoyments of our Pleasures, here on Earth; and to set out our Folly the plainer, (which indeed requires no Art,) let us first remember, That one Life in this Kingdom, is commonly valued but at seven years Purchase; and though some live longer, yet many die sooner.

Next let us consider, how to but maintain this Life, what Cares and Hardships Men undergo, binding their Sons Apprentices for many years, to learn but an ordinary Trade; during which Time, they must still rise early, and often go to Bed late, and work all Day hard, and this they willingly undergo for seven years, meerly to get a Trade to maintain them, after the Expiration of these years. And a Kin to this, is that of our Merchants, who Sail both to the *East* and *West-Indies*, and endure the long and great Fatigue of such Voyages, with the Perils of the Sea, and the scorching Heat of the Sun, to bring home Spices from the one, (which serve oftner to over-heat our Blood, than comfort our Stomachs,) and Tobacco-Weed from the other, which as the *French* say, *Makes only a fit Regale for the Devil, being but all Fire*  
and

and Smoak ; and the design and end of these long Voyages, are but to grow the Richer, and live the better in this short seven years Life ; I might instance a hundred more of the like Nature :

Now I have given you here a small sight of the great Hardships many undergo to live in this World ; let us next reflect a little, what Cares, Hardships and Endeavours, we need use, to gain an Eternity of Joys in the next, and the Price of Time we usually bid for it. Truly, the Holy Scriptures tell it us in few Words, That the Price to purchase Heaven, is only to love God, and keep his Commandments, which may be performed with great Ease, enjoyed with high Delight and vast Advantage : But instead of an *East-India* Voyage, and a seven years Apprentiship, we think an Hours faint Repentance on our Death-Bed a sufficient Price, and a fitting Time ( being useful for nothing else, ) to Purchase an Eternity of Felicity in Heaven, which exceeds more the number of all our earthly Pleasures, than a Hundred Thousand Millions of Years does a Minutes time, it being indisputably certain, that no Time that is Finite, can carry any Proportion with Eternity, which is Infinite ; for as a Learned Writer well observes in this Particular , between Time and Eternity ; *That a Day, an Hour, a Minute, carries some Proportion with a Hundred Thousand Millions of Tears, because those Hundred Thousand Millions of Tears, are comprehended and made up, by Numbers, Days, Hours and Minutes, as well as the World is of Atoms: But the Hundred Thousand Millions of Tears, have nothing to do in making up Eternity, because 'tis impossible, that Mul-*

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tiplication

tiplication can be made to reach that which is unmeasurable; Eternity being lik a Circle that has no end; far if it had one, it could be no Circle, or Eternity.

Now let us suppose, that God did bind us up to the strictest Self-denials, to the most afflicting Mortifications, and all other Severities our frail Bodies were capable to suffer in this World, during all our living in it; like the miserable Order of the *Capuchins*, who among other Severities, almost starve their Bodies with long Fastings; (an over-grown kind of Zeal, which I fancy, deserves more my Pity than Esteem, because I verily believe, that God Ordained Fasting only to curb our Sensualities, not to starve our Natures;) yet (I say) granting God had been pleas'd to have oblig'd us to all these severe Mortifications, during our Earthly Life here, which, as I said before, is generally esteem'd but at seven Years Purchase; yet we cannot but still own, or at least ever ought to do, That God's Mercy, in blessing us with Heaven, which is an Eternity of Felicity after this seven years Sufferance, exceeds more vastly our Miseries here, than a Hundred Thousand Millions of years, does seven; because (as I said before,) seven years carries some proportion to a Hundred Thousand Millions of years, but these Millions of years, carry none to Eternity, which is Infinite, and consequently, admits of no Comparifon between them; therefore, now to calculate how far God's Mercy exceeds, (at this very sad rate of severity of Life,) his Judgments, I leave it to the despisers of Heaven to sum it up, I am sure I cannot, since no numbers can reach to Eternity.

But



But our Merciful God, has no way oblig'd us to these strict Severities of Mortification, in the performance of our Heavenly Duties, while we live here; for his *Yoke is easie*, and his *Burden is light*; and he allows us time every day, to enjoy our lawful worldly Pastimes, as well as to perform our Religious Duties, in our serving him, which indeed is serving our selves.

Next, let us for shame Consider, How unjust and unequal we are, in our dealings with our God: We can without grudging, pay our Minister for reading Prayers, and Preaching a Sermon on the Lord's Day, the Tythe of our Lands; and yet we cannot afford our good God, for bestowing on us his daily Blessings and Mercies, so much as the twenty-fourth part of our Time, one hour in a Day to serve our Souls; and though we value our Lands forty and forty times more than our Time, for most of us throw that away at any Rate, as if the parting with our Time were a good Price for it; for what we value little, we still sell cheap.

But for our Lands, we will not sell for a greater Price than they are worth, nor give for our Salvation, the thousandth part of what it truly deserves; but think the last gasping Hours of our Lives are good enough for God, because being very remote, are most convenient for us.

I need not tell you, how wicked and disingenuous a manner of proceeding this is with our God, and with our selves too; since if we do but think of it, we cannot choose but blush at it, as well as we ought, in all our Lives to repent of it, and to condemn our selves, to prevent God's condemning us.

I am sure, this kind of reasoning cannot but convince our Judgments, though possibly, it may not reform our Practices; it being a much more easie matter, to perswade our selves to condemn our Sins, than to perswade our selves to forsake them, our Understandings being usually much more honest than our Wills, it being a far less difficult matter, to reconcile our Judgments to the Truth, than the Truth to our Judgments; we being all more willing to model God's Holy Laws to our corrupt Wills, than our corrupt Wills to his Holy Laws; and so far as they suit with our fancy and liking, we can go together Hand in Hand, and 'tis hard to know the true Master of our Affections and Inclinations.

Alas! We are struck into such an Atheistical Brood of Men, who deny all Religion, because they will practise none; who would fain bring Heaven to Earth, because they will not change Earth for Heaven, nor Darknes for the Sun; their Deeds being fitter for the former than the latter; being a sort of Men, that will neither keep Company with, nor follow after any Heavenly Counsel, because Scripture contains it, nor perform any Religious Duties, because God's Word commands it; as if what was enjoin'd as a Duty by God, could not be perform'd with an agreeable Obedience by Man; when Piety and Religion do but regulate the Functions of our Reason, not destroy the Faculties of our Senses, nor abate the Edge of our lawful Divertisements and Pleasures.

Since all Gospel-Duties are but Pleasures, being but God's gifts of Mercy; the exchanging Eternal Misery, for Everlasting Happiness;  
That

That we would *Resist the Devil*, that he might fly from us; and that we would *turn from our Wickedness and Live*, and that in Pleasure too; for sure it must be a great one, *To want no manner of thing that is good*; for he is a Fountain of Pleasure, that runs without ever ceasing, for at his Right Hand are Pleasures for evermore.

Certainly, if we did but reflect on this as we ought, we could never act as we do, nor love the World for the Time to come, as we have done in that which is past; for 'tis a certain Maxim, That we can part without great grief, what we love with little passion; but our carnal Hearts, our vicious Appetites, and our corrupt Habits in our Loves and Likings, make us shun and detest all spiritual Reflections, and divine Comforts of the Gospel; our diseased Humours which we abound in, having so vitiated our Palates, as we dislike any Doctrine, that savours of Vertue, Charity, or Piety; imitating the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, who preferr'd the *Flesh-Pots of Egypt*, before the *Heavenly Manna*.

And truly 'tis no wonder, when we abandon real and everlasting Felicities, only for momentary imaginary ones, that we live after this manner, and act after this rate; when Earthly Pleasures differ, if possible, as much from Heavenly Felicity, as Time does from Eternity, which is so far from being a little part of it, as 'tis none at all, and admits no share, or comparison with it.

Our Vanity, Pride and Sensualities, are our Counsellours in this World, which are just such as *Rehoboam* once had, when he called the young and debauch'd Men to it; so we choose the wickedness of a

vicious Life, before the Vertues of a Holy one, and live here, without a thought of ever living hereafter: But let such take this concluding Memorandum with them, which is a Gospel one, *Except you repent, you cannot be saved*: This is to impenitent Sinners a terrible Sentence; and yet as a Learned Father says, *More just than terrible, and so much more terrible, as 'tis most just.*

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The T E N T H  
D I S C O U R S E.

*Of the way to Heaven, which God's Word tells us, is plain and easie; and does not consist (as some Divines seem to Preach,) in much Learning, scholastick Disputes, great Difficulties, and variety of Church Ceremonies; but in a Plain, Honest, Vertuous and Pious Life.*

**I**AM not certain, that this unlearned Discourse will suit with your Expectation, but I am sure 'twill answer my Design; so that though the reading it may not please you, yet the writing of it does satisfie me, because it truly aims at Vertue and Piety; and I prefer a Satisfactory Truth, in the Actions of my own Life, before a Learned Knowledge in the Lives  
of

of all others, and I fancy with a great deal of reason too, since Truth is a part of Vertue, and Vertue of Piety; for none can be truly Vertuous, that is not truly Pious: And since none can deny, but Vertue is more essentially necessary to Salvation than Learning, or being well vers'd in all Arts and Sciences; since a great measure of Piety and Vertue without these, will secure us Heaven, but never so much Learning without these, will ever carry us there, but rather intitle us to a greater number of Stripes.

True Holiness being the Empress of all Sciences, the safe and stately Harbour towards which all Rational, as well as Divine Studies ought to steer to, and delight; for as the Apostle says, *Other knowledg may puff up, but this like Charity doth Edify*; and therefore Holy David tells us, *He made keeping Gods Commandments both his Study and Delight*, for which God Crown'd him with that glorious Character, *Of being a Man after his own Heart*: And Solomon the Wisest of Men, makes the main drift of his Book of *Proverbs* to invite Men to the Study of this great Heavenly Wisdom of Fearing God, and keeping his Commandments, which contains the whole duty of Man, and work of Christianity.

Other Learning may indeed concern the Improvements of Mens Wit, and Pens, or serve the interest of Disputes, and advancing a Faction, or governing a Party, or Preaching to a Congregation, or the like; but 'tis pure Piety, and true Virtue, that must make us wise to Salvation.

Scripture tell us, that the Alms and Prayers of the *Centurion* were heard and answer'd, tho' he never understood the Learning of the Philo-

fophers, nor the Language of the Catholick Church, yet God sent him an Angel to transfer it to him, and to Convert him; for as the *Psalmist* says, *He that lifts up his Soul to God, the Lord will cause him to know the way wherein he should walk, for God is near unto them that seek him*; and if we but live Religiously as we ought, our Merciful God will never fail in directing us in finding the Way, the Truth, and the Life Everlasting.

For though 'tis a confess'd truth, own'd by the greatest Doctors of the Colledges of Physicians, That not one of them can certainly cure any one Disease by the infallible Rules of their Art and Study; which occasions some of them, now and then to kill Men, by trying Experiments, and to send them to the other World, by making new Physical Essays on them in this.

But for Spiritual Physick, though I pretend not to be any Doctor in it, yet I dare venture to write you down a Receipt, and prescribe you a Remedy, which if you will but take constantly, and observe punctually, will prove an universal never failing Remedy, useful to all sorts of Christian Tempers; which is, to acquire a Habit of Vertue, Piety, and active Charity, for these are a better preservative to our Spiritual Life, than a Temperate Diet, Moderate Exercise, or a Healthful Air, can be to our Natures.

Prayers and Charity do in a manner retain God for to be our Intercessour, and chase the Wax fit for the Seal of the Holy Spirit; in a word, they are so essentially necessary to Eternal happiness, as we may as well pretend to be happy without happiness, as to be truly happy without them.

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Therefore the way to possess this Blessed Happiness, is to shun all ill Company, and vain Disputes, which are inconsistent with either Charity or good Living; and not to wade into dark interpretations, and lose our time about needless Questions of our vain refin'd Disputers, made up by Learned Arts, and Litigious Subtilties, about Free-Will, Self-Merit and the like, agreeable for young Scholars to whet their Wit on, and waste their time, but useless for any good Christians to reap any benefit by: For this is a certain Maxim, What is not absolutely necessary to be believ'd, is not essentially necessary to be known, and consequently needless to be Disputed.

For Preachers should rather Preach sound Practical Divinity, to make Men use constant Praying, daily Repentance, active Charity, Brotherly Love, with a continued Practice of Modesty, Meekness, Temperance and Humility in all our Actions; for *God resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble*, as we may Read largely exemplified, in the event of our Mother *Eves* aspiring presumption, and the Blessed Virgins extraordinary Modesty and Humility: And as all other examples of Pride and Humility are drawn but in Dead Colours, in comparison of this Splendid Instance, so sure our Hearts must be very hard, and our Understanding strangely dull, if this Example does not present to us in the most lively Colours, the just deserved punishment of Pride, and the vast advantage of Humility.

Humility indeed of all Christian Vertues, is the most commonly own'd, the least really possess'd, and the most easily counterfeited in all  
our

our Worldly Affairs, and outward Behaviour; and the reason of it is very plain, because an outward Figure of Humility costs little, and its trouble is small, since the very rule of good Manners, and the examples of good Company, renders an outside Civility, and seeming Humility, to be habitual in most high-born, and well-bred Persons.

But it acts quite contrary in most other Counterfeit Vertues, for a Dissembling Charity afflicts our Purse, and crosses our Covetous Humour; and a shew of Patience when we are Angry, frets our very Nature; and to have a meaner Opinion of our selves than others, is a Debasement of our self-conceitedness, almost to an impossibility of effecting it. In a word, Humility being a vertue acquir'd by Grace, and Pride a Sin bred in us by Nature, they must be like Light and Darkness; there's no uniting them, but the receiving of the one, is the banishment of the other.

But the sincere Humility of the Inward Man, is a Cardinal Vertue that few possess, which is, to be Humble and Meek to all Persons, at all times, and on all occasions, as well to those below us as above us, without thoughts of gain, or hopes of Praise, without being at all cast down by Adversity, or puffed up by Prosperity; but in all things to submit our Wills to God, who disposes all things for the best to them that truly love and serve him.

In short, Humility is the Soul of Practical Christianity, and ought to have his daily circular course through all the actions of our Lives, as the Blood has through all the Veins of our Body; Piety and Charity being the true Learning all  
good



our; good Christians ought to Study and Practise; for  
 it will make us wise to Salvation, which meer  
 School Learning never will; for Heaven is not  
 like our Universities, only design'd for Scholars,  
 but for those that lead a Virtuous Pious Life,  
 and the *Apostle* does not say, shew me your  
 Faith by your great Learning, but by your good  
 Works; and I am confident our Merciful God,  
 makes a very large allowance for the failings of  
 Devout Intentions, and will at the Last Day,  
 judge us according to the real meaning of our  
 Will, and not according to the weakness of our  
 Understanding; and therefore St. Paul for Per-  
 secuting the Church of God, alledges, *That his*  
*Ignorance of it, was the greatest cause for his gain-*  
*ing Pardon for it.*

Truly I have often considered that the way  
 to Heaven cannot have so many steps up to it,  
 nor them so intricate and winding as some  
 Scholars seem to make it, through a Labyrinth  
 of Ceremonies and Difficulties, when Christ  
 himself is pleased to tell us, *His Yoke is easy, and*  
*his Burthen light*, and his Commands not grie-  
 vous. And certainly St. Paul understood well  
 the most subtilest Definitions; and yet we Read,  
 he only us'd Plain Words, not Dark Expressions,  
 or Intricate Difficulties, in telling us the whole  
 Counsel of God; for he declares, *He kept no-*  
*thing back from us, that was necessary and profitable*  
*to us*; yet he delivers and sums up his whole  
 Doctrin in these few Plain Words, *Repentance*  
*towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*;  
 saying, *This is the word of Faith which we Preach,*  
*that if thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord*  
*Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath*  
*raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be Saved,* Rom.

10. 9. And did not our Blessed Saviour build his Church upon the Confession of St. Peter's Creed, which was no more than his plain Enunciation, *We believe and are sure, that thou art Christ the Son of the living God?*

I am certain all that our Blessed Saviour by his Preaching taught us, and all that his Apostles by their Sermons chiefly aim'd at, and directed us to, was that we should believe Christ to be our Law-giver, and our Saviour; so that nothing else is of prime necessity to be believ'd, that is not part of this grand Article of our Faith, That our Blessed Lord Jesus is our Law-giver and Redeemer, the one declaring his greatness in himself, the other the largeness of his Mercy as to us, and both oblige us to a continual thankfulness, hearty obedience, and high Adoration of his Benefits and Blessings, which cannot be better expressed by us, than by a constant regulating our lives according to his Written Will, which is both the duty and perfection of a Christian, and the definitive measures of all Vertue and Piety, being the accomplishments of all our Religious duties and Holy performances.

Sure the Apostle using only Plain Words, ought to be an example to our Ministers, to use plain Doctrin; and yet for all these Holy Patterns, there is an Art which is grown much in fashion, not only among our Talking Lawyers, but Preaching Ministers, which is sometimes to create unnecessary obscure Mysteries in their Preaching, as well as Lawyers do in their Pleadings; when in truth, we read in plain Words, that the instruction to our Heavenly Felicity, is both easy and plain in itself, telling us, that it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and the Apostles  
to

to impose on us but a few necessary things, and those plain and comprehensive to our Reason: For Gods great Mercy, and all-knowing Wisdom, will never allow that our Eternal Salvation should depend upon Dark Sayings, Obscure Mysteries, Various Opinions, and Disputations of Men, which could never be agreed on in former Ages, nor are ever like to be in this.

The Essentials of our Religion being fully contained, and plainly set down in our Saviours Gospel, and in the Summary of the Apostles Creed, which every ordinary Person may Read, and every mean Capacity understand; which will easily be allow'd, if we but reflect on the first Preachers of the Gospel, Poor Fisher-men, and ordinary Trades-men, who in all reason we ought to believe, us'd not much Rhetorick of Speech, or height of Argument, being only to perswade the Wills of the Honest, not to exercise the Wits of the Notional.

Indeed for the Lawyers, I do not at all wonder they should raise great doubts in plain matters, and form difficult Objections on easy Questions, and twist knotty points on them, and spin out Long Discourses about them, which might be contained in few Words, since much Talking is the Lawyers Trade; they Learning to Prattle in a manner from their Youth, as Quiristers do to Sing from their Childhood; and as Sober Men do their Friends business without much Talking, so by much Talking, Lawyers do their own.

But truly I cannot find any reason why some of the Grandees of the Clergy, should stand more upon observing some meer outward Ceremonies,

nies, than performing some inward Holy Duties, and who will be angry at the least omission of a Church Ceremony, and often wink at the neglect of a Gospel Command, and more blame a Minister for omitting the one, than they usually do the Parishioners, for breaking the other; and seem more offended for a Ministers neglecting to wear a Surplice on a *Sunday*, whilst he is Reading Prayers, than for his leaving off a Pious and exemplary Life all the Week after; as if the Surplice was the Wedding Garment, and naked Piety were not more essential to Salvation, than a Large Wardrobe of Church Habits; not but I esteem them Commendable and Decent, but cannot believe them equally necessary, since Ceremonies that are but indifferent in themselves, as being only to be us'd as Ornaments to Religion, ought not to be Preach'd as essentially necessary to Salvation.

Nor can I approve of such Ministers as are displeased at Mens Singing Psalms in their Houses on Sundays, because they fancy it has a strong favour of a Conventicle Spirit; doubtless if any Master of a Family should neglect the Publick Prayers of the Church, to Sing Psalms and Read Prayers in his own House, I esteem him highly faulty, and justly deserves his Bishop or Ministers Reproof; but after a Master of a Family, with all his Household, have heard the Morning and Evening Prayers in his Parish-Church, and esteems it his duty rather to employ the remaining part of the day in Examining his Family about the Sermon, how much they remember of it, and in what they are benefited by it, and so spend the remainder of the Day in Pious Discourses, and in Reading the Bible,  
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and Singing of Psalms, and the like ; certainly spending ones time in the exercise of these Religious employments, (though I confess very unmodish,) must needs be better, and more proper for the Work of the Lords Day, than the usual Idle Country Recreations of Walking in the Church-Yard, or Fields after Evening Prayer, about advising of, or driving on a Bargain with their Neighbours, or going to Drink a Glass of Wine in a Tavern, or taste a Cup of Ale, at this or that Friends House, and there to set and Chat, and compare Notes, about which of the Fine Young Girls look'd Handsomest at Church, and was the fittest drest, and wore the most gay Petticoat ; and which Young Maid did cast kind Glances on this, or that, or the other Man, or the like.

There are other Men that are less Amorous, but perhaps more Active, who are for taking a Walk after Church, in Summer-time, to make a visit to their Horses at Grass, to see how they thrive, and in their Return, to bait at some Ale-house of Ease near the Town ; for though many great rich Cities want Chappels of Ease, yet 'tis hard to find a little Town in all the Kings Dominions, so poor, as to want the convenience of an Ale-house of Ease, Ale being grown a Staple Commodity of the Country.

But for strict and pure Holiness, though it be a Heavenly Jewel of great Price, and well deserves highest Esteem, greatest Love, and most eager endeavours of all Men, above all things ; yet 'tis grown so unmodish and despicable among most, as few now adays think it worth their thought, much less their concern, to employ their time about it : Yet certainly these Religious

ligious Exercises are to be preferr'd much before those Idle Pastimes, though these are little in use, those much in practice : And so I have ended in few words ; for a Sabbath days Journey ought to be short.

Nor do I fancy such Ministers as raise dark Paraphrases on plain and clear Gospel Precepts, and Christian Duties, in the works of Religion, and ways of Piety, extracting out of Plain Scripture Doctrin, such perplexing difficulties, as one might almost reasonably fancy, that the business of their Sermons, were rather to start many doubts, than fully to resolve any ; which is a sort of means, rather to talk us out, than Preach us into Heaven.

Some of our Ministers concerning and busying themselves more about what did become of *Lazarus* his Soul, the Four days his Body was in the Grave, than what will become of their own Souls, or their Parishioners when they themselves shall come to die.

Indeed 'tis most certain, that Christ's Holy Gospel is plain and easy ; this is the way, walk in it, not entertaining your selves with needless Disputes about it, which are already so voluminous on Record, as 'twill require another *Methusalem's* Age to but Read them over. And yet when our Clergy have thundered out, both in their Long Sermons, and Large Books, their greatest terrors against Sin, and on the other side, have invited us by their greatest Arts, and highest allurements they can invent and express, to taste the blessed satisfactions, and enjoy the Heavenly delight that belongs to a Pious Life ; yet they are fully contain'd, clearly set down, and plainly summ'd up in these Two Gospel Lines,

Lines, *He that believeth not shall be Damned, and he that believeth shall be Saved*; to plainly evince us in few words, that Hell is the punishment of Wicked Sinners, and Heaven the reward of Pious Christians. And I am certain after our Ministers have said all they can invent, they must yield, that they cannot set out higher Felicity than Heaven, nor describe a greater Misery than Hell.

And in like brevity of Speech, and plainness of Word, are contained all the Duties of our Religion, if we will believe the Calculation of the most Wise Man, inspired by the Omniscient God in this point, who says that the Sum total, and the conclusion of the whole matter of Christianity, and Duty of a Christian, is contained in fearing God, and keeping his Commandments.

And certainly if we would but seriously reflect and contemplate as we ought, we shall find it altogether unsuitable to the great goodness, and abundant mercy of our gracious God, to make the way to our Salvation to depend upon great Difficulties, and high Knowledge; as if Heaven were like our Colledges, made meerly for the Learned; that would be in effect, to make our Merciful Saviours Blessed Gospel to resemble a Cob-web for Flies, where all the Strong break through, and only the Weak stick; so the Unlearned must Perish, or else be Saved by a whole-sail implicate Faith on their Church, as the *Roman-Laity* do, who esteem their Church to be now, as *Noah's Ark* was during the Flood, where none could be Saved out of it; but thus much I am sure I may safely declare, without offending either *Papist* or *Protestant*, that Vertue  
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and Piety are very good though in *Rome*, and Vice and Sin very bad, whether in or out of it.

*Solomon* assures us, that Religion is cloathed in Sun-beams, and consequently plainly discernable to every Rational and Pious Eye; and therefore not to be used by the Clergy, like a Candle in a Dark Lantern, only to serve their own occasions and interests, to put a better gloss, and add a greater power, and raise a higher price for their Absolutions, by making the poor Laity believe they are cleans'd of their Sins, when they are only gull'd of their Money.

As for my own part, I am fully assur'd, that 'tis not the Priests Absolution, nor our own Merits can save us; but only those of the Blessed Jesus; and therefore we have a Thousand times more cause to beg our own Merits, or our Priests Absolution, not to stand between us and the Son of God, than ever *Diogenes* had cause to desire *Alexander* not to stand between him and the Sun of this World.

Nor have I so good an opinion of the Infallibility of the Pope, as the silly Laity of the *Roman* Church has, who think they are bound to follow his Doctrin through thick and thin, with a full cry of Obedience. Nor yet have I so bad an opinion of the Pope, as a Minister of *Geneva* express'd, by saying, *He found the Pope follow'd his Predecessor St. Peter in nothing, except in that of Denying his Lord and Master.*

As to my own sense concerning the Clergy, I esteem it to be the great duty, and main employment of the Ministry, to instruct the Ignorant, and prompt the Knowing, in all Gospel per-



performances, and that not only by their Learned Preaching, but Exemplary Religious Living, Example being usually more prevailing than Precept; and certainly we are to follow our Clergies Directions, no farther than they follow Christs Gospel Doctrin, and that no Clergy Man ought to pretend a power to ingage our Faith in any point necessary to Salvation, unless we are fully assured they are warranted by Gods Sacred word so to do; and then if I do not submit my belief to their Doctrin, being so Warranted, my sin does not so properly consist in declining my Clergies Will, as in my disobedience to Gods Word; and therefore let the *Roman* Laity pay what obedience they please to their Clergy's direction, the duty we Protestants owe to it, consists in a submitting to Gods Will; for if we esteem it not so, we ought not to esteem it a duty, I mean that is sufficiently obligatory to bind on us an Article of Faith; and therefore though our Clergy teach us the Truth in our Religion, 'tis not the truth meerly because they teach it, but meerly because Gods Word Records it; for there can be no truth contrary to it.

But I shall decline writing any more on this Subject, it being fitter for a Volume than a short Discourse, and more proper to be argued on by a Learned Divine, than such a Poor Ignorant Lay-man as my self; but yet how little and dull I have writ on this Subject, I hope for all 'twill be sufficient to satisfy the Reader, that Salvation does not consist in Scholastick Disputes, wrapt up in deep Sophistry, and obscure Difficulties, and variety of Ceremonies, but in a Vertuous Pious Life: And I dare appeal to the

Universal Judgment of Mankind, if St. Peter's Doctrin be not the very best on this point, who directs us to use Christian Charity, true Humility, and Brotherly Love to one another ; and not to add Disputes to Disputes, but to add to Faith Vertue, and to Vertue Knowledge, and to Knowledge Temperance, &c.

The Psalmist gives us great encouragement, by telling us, *That Men will praise us when we do well to our selves* ; and sure nothing can be more advantagious or praise worthy, than to be wise to Salvation.

And so I shall conclude this Discourse with Job's Divine Observation, *The Fear of the Lord is true Wisdom, and to depart from Evil is true Understanding* ; therefore true Piety is true Wisdom, and they that live the best Lives, are both the ablest Scholars and the best Men ; for true Goodness is true Greatness, and 'twill ever be much better to have ones Name Writ in the Book of Life, than in the First Rank of the Book of Heralds ; for true greatness is only in Heaven, and the Almighty values none for the Worldly Greatness of their Birth, but for the Heavenly Goodness of their Life.

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## The ELEVENTH

## DISCOURSE,

*Against the common Sin of Swearing, with some of the principal Evasions, Pretences and Excuses, the Devil furnisheth the Swearers with, to embolden them in the Practice of this vile Sin.*

**T**Here are two kinds of Swearing; the first is a necessary one, on useful Occasions, when an Oath is ( as the Apostle says, ) to end all Strife.

The other, is a needless taking God's Name in vain, upon a meer sinful and customary Account: which is the sole Enemy I shall here undertake.

Swearing is a Sin, that hath nothing belonging to Sin, but the Guilt and Punishment of one, having no Inducements to commit it, but the Willfulness to act. When the Devil first sent forth, and scattered his Emissaries abroad in the World, to seduce Mankind, he furnished every one of them with a Dowry, either of Fame, or Pleasure, Honour, or Profit, as a Bait to Bribe the Senses, whilst he was Rifling the Soul, and only poor silly Swearing was left

Portionless, and *Camelion*-like, to live on the Air; being a Mistress only fit for those generous Swearers, that needed no Temptation; but loving Wickedness as they ought to do Vertue, for its own sake alone, and who aim'd at nothing in acting that Sin, but the wicked Satisfaction of committing it.

Swearing, is in the Opinion of all sober and vertuous Persons, a Sin, the most unpardonable, and least excusable; because all have a Power to refrain from it, and none any Delight in using of it, being a Sin destitute of all Temptations, Advantages, or Apologies, having nothing to plead for it self, but sinful senseless Custom; so that in subduing the Custom of this Sin, all is done, there being nothing but the Custom to subdue.

And since none has the Impudence to say, That needless customary Swearing is no Sin, I shall desire the Swearer seriously to consider, Whether it be fitter, that God should make it no Sin, or the Swearer not to make it his; or that the Almighty should be oblig'd to break his own Laws, that the wicked Swearer might be justified in breaking of them; or that God should be reconciled to the evil of its Nature, or the Swearer to abstain from the illness of its Practice.

And since the Swearer lacks Impudence to deny the Custom of Swearing to be a Sin, for shame, let him not want Confidence to forsake the Practice of that Custom, and be not like that wicked modest Whore, who pretended Bashfulness hinder'd her from growing honest; which minds me of a saying of a good old Gentleman, that seeing a Kinsman of his in  
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the Streets, peeping out of a Bawdy-house, and stealing out that none might see him, the good old Gentleman call'd out aloud to him, *Come out, come out, be not asham'd for leaving such a wicked House, but be asham'd for ever having gone into it.* 'Tis only Fools will laugh at your forsaking of Sin, Wise Men will at your continuing in it; so that since Laughter will Besiege you on both sides, sure 'tis better to endure that of Fools, than deserve that of wise Men.

Really, I cannot reflect upon the foolish Madness of Swearers, but it makes me inclinable, not so much to wonder at the Folly of our first Parents, who indeed lost Paradise for an Apple; which, though a windy Meat, is still something Eatable; but those that part with their Souls for Oaths, sell them for nothing but meer Wind, and that of the very worst sort too, being a Soul-blasting one.

Sure that Expression in the Scripture, that sometimes puts the Word *Folly*, for that of *Sin*, seems chiefly Calculated for the *Sin of Swearing*, which has not so much shelter, as a weak Pretence, or Apology to defend it self; wanting, not only the Temptation of an Excuse, but the very Excuse of a Temptation, unless that Oaths, being forbid by God, pass for one.

Certainly, if the Apostles mentioning Superfluity of Naughtiness, belongs to any Sin, 'tis to that simple one of Swearing; being so very foolish, as the silly *Indians*, that part with their Gold and Jewels, for Glasses, Whistles, and such Trifling Toys, are wise Men to Swearers, whose madness exceeds the fam'd Folly of *Lysimachus*, who being extreamly Thirsty, to get some Water to drink, gave himself a voluntary

Prisoner to his soon-after vanquish'd Enemies.

I am sure, if there be any Disparity in this Comparison, 'tis in the Swearers favour, it being certainly a less ill Bargain, to sell ones Liberty for a Belly-full of Water, than ones Soul for a mouthful of Air; all other Sins have some fancied Pleasure, or Advantage to create and maintain them, and all other Sinners, but the Swearers, are in the Devil's Pay; but the common Swearer may well be call'd the Devil's Volunteer, for he ventures his Soul, only for the wicked Honour of serving him, and the damnable Misery of losing it.

And now that I may give the common Swearer, as little pretence, as he has Reason for his Swearing, I shall do with this Sin, as Watch-makers do with Watches, which are foul and out of Order, take them in Pieces, and Anatomize them, to see the Defects of each part, in order to the cleansing and mending of the whole, and single out the principal Excuses, Pretences and Evasions, Men ordinarily allow themselves, for the misunderstanding, and undervaluing this common and wicked Vice; for 'tis with Sins as with Diseases, the Discovery of their Cause, is the first necessary step towards the obtaining their Cure.

I shall therefore Soldier-like, draw up in Rank and File, the Swearers Allegations and vain Pretences, and so Examine and Exercise them apart, dividing them into nine Divisions; and hope by this Regular Method, to tare all those Fig-leaves of Evasions, the Devil teacheth them to sow together, to hide the Deformity of this Sin, and to shew you, I do not condemn the Swearer without great Reason, tho' you

you need not hear mine, but his own Reasons of Justification to condemn himself; as *Goliath's* Head was cut off by *David*, not with his own Sword, but *Goliath's*.

The first and grand Pretence I am to remove, is, That though most allow Swearing to be a Sin, yet they will not be perswaded, to believe it other than a slight venial one, only a kind of rash Words, the Frailties of humane Nature and ordinary Practice, as very small, as common; for if slight Oaths could be rank'd among great Sins, in what a sad Condition were all Mankind, since the number of Swearers, is little inferiour to that of Men?

Indeed, 'tis one of Satan's Master-Stratagems, so to mix his Subtilty, with Mens Simplicity and Heedlesness, as to represent them great Sins under the Disguise of little ones, and by giving us the wrong end of the Perspective Glass, to make small Sins to look so very little, as to be scarce discernable to be any at all, or at most, only small trifling ones, not worth our Thoughts, much less our Fears; and if the Devil can but once perswade us, to believe any Sin small, we may be easily brought to esteem none great, since the least offends the Goodness and Justice of God; and therefore, 'tis well worth our Consideration, that since the least unpardon'd Sin is sufficient to damn us, why should we slight petty Faults, because there are greater Crimes?

And if you read the Ten Commandments, you will find, That Swearing has the Precedency of Theft, Murder and Adultery, being the sole Commandment save one, that has a Threat annexed to it; and certainly, if those  
Trespases

Trespases are most severely dealt with, that are alone punishable by the supream Magistrate, Swearers ought to consider, what a fearful thing it is, to fall into the Hands of the living God, who has often punished such Offenders so severely, as they have had no more Reason to brag, that their Oaths are exempted from the Cognizance of Men, than Muderers or Thieves have to boast they are above the Beadle and the Stocks, when 'tis only on the score, that their Crimes are reserved for the Gallows; or as if the Jews had reason to brag of those Indulgencies that were granted them, when 'twas only for the Hardness of their Hearts.

I am sure, there's no Man that can justly pretend to the Title of a good Christian; but must be troubled, that Swearing is so much used, and so little punish'd; for certainly 'tis our common Oaths that have sharply pointed those fatal Arrows, that have almost destroy'd all Religion, Vertue, Sobriety and Modesty among us, and has made Swearing so very usual, as many cannot speak ten Words without an Oath; and if some, I know, did use their Prayers, as frequent as their Oaths, they would seem to obey literally that qualified Injunction of the Apostle, of *Praying without ceasing*.

So common is the Sin of Swearing among us, as there are little Children in our very Streets, that can swear great Oaths, before they can speak plain *English*; and so are perfect, in the Devil their Father's Language, before they are old enough to know their Mother Tongue.

Indeed, I cannot but wonder at some, who are so very foolish as to suppose, that the commonness of the Sin of Swearing, renders it less blameable,



blameable, for being so much practised, and because almost all use this Sin, that therefore none are punishable for it, which is a vile Mistake; since multiplying Faults, does but increase their Infection, not lessen their Sin; for what is publicly allow'd, is not still lawfully practised, nor did I ever read, that numbers of Criminals can ever lessen the heinousness of their Offences.

We find, that the Universality of the *Sodomites* Beastliness, was so far from justifying each single Sinner, that they were all consumed from Heaven, for the sole want of ten Righteous Persons; which is a most clear Argument, that the Sins of many did not excuse any; but the Righteousness of a few, had saved all.

Certainly, he whose Command is, *That thou shalt not follow a Multitude to do Evil*, will hardly take the common Practice of that Multitude, for a just Dispensation of breaking the Law of God, who having commanded us to live by good Precepts, will hardly accept it for an Excuse, that we have err'd by bad Example.

No, 'tis most certain, that as in Pious Duties, the general Concurrence contributes to their Acceptation, so in Sin, the like consent does but hasten on Destruction; for Legions of Men in the Sin of Swearing, are but like many Men in old leaking Ferry-Boats, whose Numbers are so far from helping one another, as they all make themselves but sink the quicker.

There is a second Degree of Swearers, that are indeed less ill than the common sort, being more gentile than the worst; and those are they who esteem it, against the Principles of a Gentleman to swear falsely, but will not remember,

ber, 'tis against the Duty of a Christian to swear needlessly; and these fancy to excuse their swearing, by saying, *They scorn to swear an Untruth, and what they know to be true*; they hope, by not swearing falsely, they may swear safely, (so easily Men believe what they desire,) but with as little Reason, as they swear with need; for that, not only false alone, but all rash and unnecessary Oaths, are clearly forbidden by the Commandment, where Perjury is not condemned singly, but 'tis flatly written, *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in Vain*, which if needless customary Swearing does not, it must sure be a strange Riddle, what the Commandment means to prohibit; but God himself seems manifestly to determine this Controversie, by that clear Distinction in a Verse of *Leviticus*, *And you shall not swear by my Name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the Name of thy God*; which plainly shews, we may profane God's Name, without swearing falsely.

But allowing these customary Swearers the whole Swing of their Fancy, and supposing their Oaths were scandalous to none, nor prejudicial to any; and are but customary Words, and only small venial Faults, as the Effects of Heedlessness, or Ignorance, or Passion, rather than ill Design; yet in this, and the most favorable and Complemental Sense we can possibly give them, Oaths must be very bad, since they are fashions of speaking, that are always needless, often scandalous, and never profitable; and what's worst of all, the bad Custom of swearing does inure our Mouths, to a sawy wicked slighting of that Holy Name, which Eternally to Praise, will be in Heaven, both our Employment and our Happiness. The

The Third Brood of Swearers are very merciful, ( I mean to themselves, ) for though they swear commonly, yet they will not believe they swear often, because their Conscience rarely accuses them for it, nor their Memory minds them of it, which sure both would, if they did often swear : But I desire such to consider, that the Essence of Vice consists in a Repugnancy to God's Law ; and therefore, every little is too much, and he that swears the fewest Oaths, swears too many by those few ; and the same Consideration that contracts the numbers of the Swearers Oaths, does in some kind aggravate Guilt, by arguing both a clearer Knowledge of the Evil he acts, and a more brideling Power to refrain the Sin he commits.

But how seldom does the silence of Conscience make for him ? We know that insensibility of Pain, may as well proceed from the Deadness and Stupifiedness of the Parts, as from a perfect and unmolested Health ; and in fighting, that is still held the heavier Blow, that so stuns, that it takes away the Sense of the Pain, than that which pains the Sense.

How many Swearers are there, in whose Mouths Custom swears undiscernedly, and who being taxed for it, will swear, and possibly believe what they swear too, that they are no Swearers, and so commit the Sin, by endeavouring to excuse the Fault ? But good Physicians still esteem it a fatal Symptom, when Excrements are voided without the Patients knowledge ; and 'tis a sign, the Thief has haunted long, when the Mastiff forbears to bark at him ; in such Cases, Conscience, like oppressed Subjects under an armed Tyrant, forbears Expostulations,

postulations, not for want of just causes of Complaint, but out of long use of suffering: And the Swearer may be sure, that the Lethargy of Security, is much more dangerous, than the Fever of a restless Conscience, since the Danger of this, soon drives one to the search of the Cure; but the Security of the other, is so far from addressing him to Remedies, as it never lets him know he needs them.

And though these sorts of Swearers are not so bad as others are, yet they are still worse than they ought to be; and others who are greater and more common Swearers, do the more condemn themselves, but do not at all the more excuse the Folly of these Sinners.

There are a fourth kind of half witted Men, (but whole Fool Swearers,) who will not swear in the common Circle of ordinary Oaths, but will conjure up new ones of their own making, that may vent their Anger, and as they fancy, without any Sin; for they will not flatly swear *By God*, but *By Dod*, and not by the Creator, but by the Creature, as *by this Light*, *by this World*, *by Heaven*, and the like, they believing it no Sin, to take the Creatures Name in vain: Thus many cozen themselves, by thinking to cheat God: But Swearer, *be not deceived*, *God will not be mocked*; for though these Childish Evasions may cozen you, they can never him who judges as well as discerns; and regards not so much the outward Signification of the Word, as the inward meaning of the Heart.

But if we will allow our Saviour to be the best Interpreter of his Fathers Commands, he will teach us a very differing Lesson, for, he bids us in his Gospel, not to swear either by  
*Heaven,*

Heaven the Noblest, or by Earth the worst Ingredient of this vast Fabrick of the World; and therefore certainly intended that that prohibition should reach all other Creatures contained in them. These Swearers do with Gods Name, as the first Bloody Persecutors did with the Primitive Christians, who cloathed them in Skins of Savage Beasts, that it might seem no crime to worry them; so these Hypocrites disguise Gods Name, to give themselves a License to dishonour it.

Indeed 'tis a very pretty sight of these Gentlemen to cozen the Devil to his own advantage, and to find out by-ways to Damnation, to descend to Hell by a pair of Back Stairs, caring not, if that like *Saul* to the Witch of *Endor*, they may go Masked to Satan.

There are a foolish Drove of Swearers, that hold a false Opinion, that they are freed from the Sin, because they never Swear, but when they are provoked to it by Anger; and such Oaths the Devil perswades them cannot be Murthering Sins, being at worst but Chance-Medly Crimes, only Sworn in heat of Blood, without any ill Intent, or design'd Prejudice.

I would fain know of one of these angry Swearers, who thus pretends to justify himself, whether he would be ready to do the like to his Young Wife, if she should tell him, that she never prostrates her self, but when she is provok'd to be unchaste by her Lust; which was a Sin only acted in heat of Blood, forced on her by Nature, without the least designed Injury, or unkindness to him.

Besides, this is to excuse one fault by another, and with no greater Justice than his, that should defend

defend a Bastards Crimes, by alledging that his Mother was a Whore; since the nature as well as the duty of Vertue being the moderation of our Passions, its evident that their excesses degenerate into Sin, and therefore how that can be a good excuse, that needs one, and how that anger, which in it self is sinful, can impart an Innocence to Productions in their own Nature wicked, and how Passions that swell into an excess, can confirm a Meritoriousness which themselves want, is a Doctrin so very irrational, as 'tis impossible to be fancied, if the Apostles command be considered, *Be ye angry, but sin not.*

Is it not a most shameful Reproof that History Records of *Plato*, who though a Heathen, could yet use such temper towards his very Slave, as to say to him, *I would now beat thee, but that I am angry*; when we Christians cannot spare our very Maker when we are so?

Really I cannot but wonder, when I see so many Passionate Men, which in that humour are so transported, as to commit Sins that are as very unprofitable, as truly impious; and therefore deserve their Crosses, by being guilty of a faucy provoking of God, and endeavouring to make him their Enemy, when they most need his Protection as a Friend; and because their ill desires cannot reach their Mistresses Heart, that therefore their Tongue must fly in their Makers Face, and vilify his most Sacred Name, because perhaps their Mistresses do not dart Smiles as they desire, nor their Dice turn Casts as they wish; for indeed Mistresses and Dice are much alike now a days in their Constancy, being certain only in uncertainty; for Beauty and Love are but just things as accidental chances are,  
causes

causes that work by no certain Rule, or rational Measure, and so can have no order nor constancy in the event; and therefore they that trust in their Mistresses Beauty, or Swear at their Dices Chances, must necessarily shew folly, as well as act Sin.

I would further desire the Swearer to consider whether God, whose Name they thus profane, be or be not, the guider of their Mistresses kind Looks, or of their Dices good or bad Chances; if he be not, and does not meddle with their disposal, then they must necessarily be palpably injurious, to make God the object of their Choler, when he is neither the promoter nor hinderer of their Mistresses kindness, nor the causer of their Dices good or bad chances. But if God be their Guider, then their Folly is not inferior to their Anger, who instead of humbly intreating, do highly incense that Deity, who is the sole disposer of those fortunes they so passionately wish or fear.

Therefore let such Swearers take heed, whilst they despise the Apostles directions, and cannot be angry, but they must Sin, that God does not punish in his Anger those Sinful Oaths they so often use.

As for the other branch, the innocency of the Intent, 'tis certain, Actions commonly offend more than Intentions; and I believe we should not think our selves less injured by High-way-Men, who should Rob us of our Mony, because they did not offer us that violence, to raise or provoke our Anger, but meerly to empty our Pockets to fill their own; No, meaning well, cannot excuse doing ill.

But what reason have I to waste more Time and Ink on their impudent and senseless defence, that make their Sin of Drinking, an excuse for their Sin of Anger, and the Sin of Anger a License for their Sin of Swearing? Indeed it often happens, that acting one Sin, may occasion committing another; but 'twas never heard, that acting one Sin, justified committing another, since we must not do Ill, that Good may come of it.

There are among the Crowd of Swearers, a Sixth sort, that are satisfied with using one particular Oath, being a kind of Separists from all the others, who think to make themselves eminent, by being singular, and fancy by using only one certain Oath, whilst other Swearers use Hundreds, their own will be lost in the Crowd, so as not to be taken notice of; which is just such a kind of Excuse, as if a Drunkard should offer to justify himself for his Drunkenness, by saying, He is never Drunk but with one sort of Wine.

Sure such have drunk away their Memory as well as their Conscience, or else they could not forget that Gospel publication, *That whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and shall yet offend in one Point, is guilty of all*; so that one Oath is too many by one, when one is enough to Damn.

For if a Reverence to Gods Commands, did place limits to the variety of our Oaths, it would not permit us any one, but lay an equal restraint on all; since the sinfulness of Swearing does not consist in the diversity of Oaths, but in their prohibition. The eating an Apple, was  
in



in itself but an Innocent, Harmless thing ; but being once stamp'd with Gods strict Prohibition, we all know it afterward proved a most Disobedient and Damnable Sin.

But this excuse itself is wanting to many of the Gallants of our Times, who are not content to travel in the old common Road to Hell, and to keep in the beaten Track, and usual forms of Dishonouring their Maker, but affect as much Novelty in Oaths, as in Fashions ; and if they have a gift of Singularity in Swearing, they fancy they have as much reason to be Proud of it, as I am sure Vertue has to be Asham'd of them.

Such Swearers are as Nice as Impious, and use their Oaths as the Fine Gallants do their Cloaths or Misses, change often, and use none so long as till they grow old ; for a Gallants Love, and a Misses Beauty have such a kind of sympathetick operation one on the other, as want of Beauty presently causes want of Love, and like Light and Darkness, the advance of one, still occasions the retreat of the other.

There is a Seventh sort of Swearers, that think they have reason to Quarrel with me for calling them such ; they being only Repeaters of an other Mans Oaths, which they will have to be his sin, not theirs.

I would fain know in what Year of the Lord 'twas, that Transgression by President turns to Innocence, and what was unlawful in the First Act, became Legitimate in the Repetition ; I am sure in our good *English* Laws, though the First Theft is only Punishable with a Burning in the Hand, yet the Repetition is still with a Hanging by the Neck.

To this may be added, that this sinning at Second hand, the Copied Sin is held more Criminal in the Transcript than in the Original; for besides that, the Swearer by imitation, acknowledges himself so delighted with the others Sin, as he becomes the Devils Mountebank or his *Lani*, to have it admir'd by all that hear him; and all know that approbation is a tacite consent; and he that repeats anothers Oaths with delight, it may be a greater Sin in him that does so, than a Rash Oath was in him that Swore it; which might be perhaps blotted out, without thinking what he did. But besides all this, the Leading Swearer has the excuse of an immediate Applause; whereas the Silly Apish Repeating Imitatour, Wrongs and Discredits his own Soul, meerly to proclaim anothers Wit, if that be not too partially term'd Wit, which only appears such to our Corruptions, since where the Oath doth make the Jest, 'tis only the Devil in us, that's pleas'd with it.

Witty Replies are good without Oaths, and Dull ones will not be made good by them; to the one they are needless, to the other useless. 'Tis with Oaths in Mens Discourses, as with Patches in Womens Faces; the Handsome ones need them not, and the Ugly ones are made but the more ridiculous by them. *Fools* (says the Wise Man) *make a mock at Sin*, and therefore make that the sport of their Jollity, which ought to be the object of their Detestation.

Sure such extravagancies of Excess, deserve as much our wonder as our blame, that we poor  
frail

frail Mortals, whose Faults are as numerous as the Minutes we have lived, can yet think our own Sins too few to condemn us, without Adopting those of others, and so add to our crimes so numerous already, those other Sins of Supererogation.

The eighth sort of Swearers, would fain perswade himself and others too, if he could make them such Fools as to believe him, That he has a kind of Protection and Justification for his swearing, which is, That if he did not swear, he should never be believ'd by his Acquaintance, nor obey'd by his very Servants; but sure, such sort of Swearers are easily answer'd, That Belief is much better wanted, than purchased at so dear a Rate as Sin; since 'tis a Gospel Lesson, That he who parts with Heaven, is sure to make a bad Bargain; since the whole World is too mean a Price for one's Soul.

What a mad way of arguing is this, to fancy, that any should take a Man's readiness to break one Commandment, for a Proof he dares not break another?

'Tis a true, as well as common Observation, That he needs not many Oaths, who uses few; for to make Conscience of an Oath, will gain ones Word more Credit, than Swearing of a Thousand, it being a very just, and highly remarkable Punishment on Oaths, That those who swear most, are believ'd least.

Since then 'tis but the Habit of swearing needlessly, that alone engageth Men to a necessity of swearing (as they call it,) to be believed, let their discontinuance remove that customary Obligation of Necessity, and I can

safely assure the Swearer, that the most perswading Argument to make his Words to be credited, is so to live, as not to need to swear.

Since then the Swearer acknowledges the Act, an Engagement to the Repetition, and that Oaths, which according to the Rule of God's Word, ought to be the highest Confirmation of Truth, as well in their Practice, as Nature, must yet by this fine devilish Policy, derive an Authority from their Multitude, which is ever unnecessary, where the Speaker is believed, and usually creates but Distrust, where the Swearer is not.

For the latter part of the Swearers Pretence, that without swearing, he could neither be believ'd by his Companions, nor feared, or obey'd by his very Servants. 'Tis strange, very strange, that their Ears are so furr'd with customary Oaths, as they must be us'd to make them think their Masters are in earnest: O strange Age that we live in, that no way can be found to make our Servants obey our Commands, without our disobeying God's! Sure, if we will but allow Reason her Vote in this Affair, 'twill tell us, that Gravity, Severity, not using to let our Servants hear us swear, are far likelier Means to reach that End; which if we should yet fail of, they will turn their fancied Inconveniency into a real Advantage, by necessitating us to the benefit of keeping Religious Servants; and sure 'tis very extravagant Logick, To teach our Inferiours to pay us their Duties, by learning them to disobey the Commands of their Superiors, by our own Example, which I am sure we do by swearing.

But

But now, not to disturb or anger the Swearer, admit that I should allow him, that the common Practice of this Vice, should force me to suppose their Objection to be true, yet will the Inference prove inconsequent; for by the same Rule, the High-way Pocket-searcher may justify his Fault, by objecting, That if he should leave off his Employment of Robbing, he must suddenly fall into certain want: And the gay impudent Miss may also alledge, unless she continues her Beastly Trade of serving her Customers, she cannot tell how to get Money, to buy fine Gowns, and see new Plays, or pay Hackney Coaches, and such like weighty Concerns; for if her Gallant has not the Power of disposing her Body, she must not have the Command of ruling his Purse; her loose Excesses being the Fuel that maintains his Flames, and without them, both his Love, and her Maintenance, would soon extinguish.

In short, upon how few could we with Justice press Religious Duties, if such petty Inconveniences that attend their Performances, were able to free and discharge them from it? Surely, he that requires we should tear out our Right Eye, and cut off our most useful Hand, if they oppose us in our Heavenly Progress, will hardly give them Admittance there, that will not refrain from, or part with an idle Oath, or a vain Miss, or such like trivial thing.

Lastly, I would desire the Swearer seriously to consider, that the whole Business is wrapt up in the small Compass of this short Question, Whether it be not more reasonable, that Ma-

sters should not be believ'd to be in earnest by their Friends, nor obeyed by their Servants, without swearing? Or, that the Almighty God should not be believ'd when he speaks, nor obey'd when he commands?

There are a ninth Degree of Swearers, which though they march in the Rear of all the Divisions, deserve as much as any, to lead on the Van of the Army, being so sottishly wicked, and ridiculously foolish, as to fancy, their Oaths cause them to be esteem'd as brave and stout Gentlemen, and witness in them a bold and daring Courage, so as not to fear God himself, though the Devil their Master, doth both fear and tremble; and these have the Impudence to esteem these Hellish Qualities, worthy to merit the Esteem of Men.

Sure these Satanists will never tempt the Admiration of wise Men, upon any other score, than that of their Folly; and certainly, there is no vertuous Christian, but who will make these wicked empty Projects, to be Objects of his Scorn and Detestation; and so, only those who have no Worth themselves, will reward them with their Praises; and such Mens Praises are but Discommendations.

Indeed these Swearers are abominably mistaken, that believe, because swearing is used by Gentlemen, that therefore, their Oaths will make them be taken for such, and raise their Name, for profaning Gods. Alas! there is too little Epicurism and Expence in the Sin of swearing, to reach that Quality; for Oaths were still so cheap, and are now so very common, that I wonder our Sparks, though they will not  
for-

forfake them for the Sins sake, yet that they do not for the Companies.

And must Sins then be Arguments of the Possession of that Dignity, that can be truly purchased by no other Means than Vertue? Sure it ought not to be so; but supposing it were, Will Swearers pretend to a Title of Gentility, by that alone which is not the Property, but the Vice of a Gentleman? and Entitle themselves to that Illustrious Quality, by that, which in the Sense of all vertuous Persons, renders them not only unworthy, but devests them of it? At this rate of Arguing, Swearers pretending to Gentility, would Parallel his Rallying Mirth, who boasted a Descent from the first *Cæsars*, barely for having, like most of them, a long deformed hook Nose; and so derived his Interest in their Blood, only from his Sympathy in their Defects.

For my part, I wonder how any can be Proud or Ambitious of those Badges of Gentility, which true Christianity esteems but the Fools Coat of Reprobation.

And for the Swearers fancying his Oaths will render his Courage unquestionable, I confess, they may seem not to want Probability to prop their Hopes, since they desperately venture damning their Souls, for such Oaths that God forbids, and all wise Men detest.

But sure, the Kindred betwixt Vertues are not so remote, that the want of one, should conclude the Possession of another, and their want of Piety, argue their store of Courage.

Besides,

Besides, the Valour Swearers personate against their Maker, were it real, 'twould not be the clear Effect of their true Courage, but rather of their Inconsiderateness, or Unbelief; *The wicked flee, says Solomon, when no Man pursueth, but the righteous are as bold as a Lion*: And indeed, 'tis no great Encouragement to despise this Life, to want Confidence of a better; nor does it at all suit with true Reason, that we ought to conclude, that he who fears not the venturing his Soul on any Account, dares therefore hazard his Life on a good one, because we find, 'tis not the Essential worth of things, but the Proprietors value that sets the Price; for what is worth to one a King's Ransom, ( his Eyes, ) is not to another, a Pins Head.

So most Mens Actions and Lives, present the Soul and Body in a very differing State, Manner, and Order of Precedency; some few living so Religiously, as if they were all Soul, but most of us live, as if we were all Body, wasting our Time so very profanely, as if we had no Souls, or had them but to lose.

So that upon a serious Reflection, we shall find, that these Swearers neglect of their Souls, doth but really proceed from a doating fondness of their Bodies; and therefore, we may very rationally judge it an unlikely Consequence, that such Swearers who dare live so wickedly, as if they had no Souls to save, dare therefore fight so boldly, as if they had no Bodies to lose, and will be willing to venture their Lives, because they do their Souls.

'Tis



'Tis a Lesson very well worth Observation, that our Experience teacheth us on this Subject, That no Men more fear what they should condemn, than those that condemn what they most should fear; and Religious Martyrs have embraced those Flames with an undaunted Courage, which those Hectoring Swearers, durst not so much as think on, without a trembling Horror.

And now I have done with my nine Divisions of Swearers, I know not whether any will allow, that I have argued well, but I'm sure all will grant, I have scribled much; and I wish I had as great Reason to believe, that I have convinced the Swearers Conscience, as I have cause to fear, I have troubled the Readers Patience: But 'tis certain, that he who needs to make Excuses for his tedious Writing, must make the Writing more tedious by his Excuses; therefore I shall write but a little more, because I fear the Reader will think I have already writ too much. And now in my Conclusion of this long Discourse, with which I wish the Swearer would also now learn to conclude all his base Oaths, and never to Swear vainly more. And now that Piety may hereafter protect you from it, as well as Wickedness formerly seduced you to it, you must Pray with the Psalmist, *Set a Watch O Lord before my Mouth, and keep the Door of my Lips from Swearing and Prophaning thy Holy Name.*

And now I pray consider, that if I have here painted this Vile, Ugly, Negro Sin, in blacker Colours than its own, (which I am sure I can hardly do,) and have represented it in over-  
large

large Dimensions, I desire you to consider 'tis hard to Draw such a Large, Spreading, Overgrown Vice in Little; and I hope I may find my Excuse in the Precedents given us by good Painters, who being to draw Pictures that are still to be seen at great distance, make them always more Gygantic than the Originals they are to resemble, to recompence by that advantage in the Dimensions, what the Eye loses by its distance from the Object; for every Sinner naturally beholds his Favorite Vice, through the false optick of Self-love, and so must have the Idea of his Crime enlarged beyond its true Proportion; and the true Proportion of vain customary Swearing, I esteem in a word to be truly this, To be a Sin too small to beget the greatest Despair, and too great to allow of the smallest Neglect.

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The TWELFTH and Last

# DISCOURSE,

*Of the Severe Censure most Publick Writers  
are exposed to.*

I Am now come to the last Stage of all my Posting Scribbles ; but yet Reader, I cannot expect with all my haste, to have done so soon as your Patience ; but though these Discourses cannot well hope so much from your Temper, as to have waited their end with Patience, yet they may justly beg so much from your Goodness, as to look on them with Charity ; for the Scripture tells us, That is able to hide many faults ; and This (my mind tells me,) is, what these Discourses highly need, as being fraited with much dullness and many defects ; and therefore pray remember, that to relieve the wants of the necessitous, carries in it still very much of a great and generous Spirit, as well as of a Christian Vertue, and pious Charity.

St. Paul tells us, *That the Bond of Perfection is Charity*, which we are above all things to put on ; and as Charity is a Relief to others, so 'tis an advantage to our selves, and makes us Rich  
in

in the other World, by supplying the wants of the Poor in this: And indeed if we Read the Books of most of the good Antient Writers, we shall find they did not publish them meerly to shew their own Parts and Wit, but for publick use, and common benefit, by decrying Vice, and extolling Vertue, in order to perswade Men to detest the one, and practise the other.

But many of the publick Scriblers of our Age, write chiefly for self-praise, or vain Pastime, to please their Fancy, or shew their Wit, to humour a Friend, court a Faction, or promote an Intreague, and the like; many of their Designs being often far from certainty and Discretion, as well as distant from Reason and Truth; some little considering what they write, and less valuing what others say, despising the whole Race of Censurers.

Really many of these sort of Writers, are so simple or careless, or both, that because they do not mind the errors of their own Writings, hope, nay expect, that others will do the like by their Example; but for their reason of expecting it, I am sure they can shew none, having none to shew. I know 'tis both an Old and Wise Maxim among great experienc'd Generals, *That in their Counsels before they venture to give Battel, they ought to foresee all Dangers; but in Fighting to oversee them, that they may encourage and embolden their Souldiers to do the like by their good and brave example:* And though I cannot deny all this to be good Fighting Logick, yet I am sure it cannot be above half good Writing Doctrin; for one to foresee the danger of the  
severe

severe Censure, and sharp Railery he exposes himself to, by Publishing his Writings, is doubtless a very useful and necessary Wisdom; but after one has once Engaged and Published himself in Print, then to overlook the Errors of it, in hopes and expectation to encourage the Readers to do the like by his Example, is Gross Folly; a Mans Thoughts are his own before he Speaks or Writes them, but they are every ones afterwards, who Reads or Hears them.

A publick Writer, like a Common Gamester, must not only use great skill, but needs good Fortune too, or he may come off a Loser; and all know that Fortune is as fickle as the Wind, which bloweth not still where 'tis needed, but always where it listeth; from whose inconstancy I shall by the by, extract this firm resolution, only to write after the rate I intend to play, which is at so small a Game, as it shall never deserve much my concern, whether I win anothers Mony, or lose my own.

I confess, 'tis uncivil to speak so slightly of Gaming, since 'tis now so much in fashion, as 'tis not only the pastime, (I had almost said great concern) of the vain Ladies and fine Sparks, as care not, or know not how to spend their time better; but Gaming is become in some sort, the solemn business of the greatest, (I do not say the Wisest) sort of Men, which I wonder they do not refrain from on this double account; First, because the Mony they Play for, they are not certain to win, but the Time they play in, they are sure to lose; and Time is a Jewel of so great a Price, that if the least Moment of  
it

it be lost, it cannot be repurchas'd with all *Cra-*  
*fus* his Wealth, nor Conquer'd with all the Em-  
 perors Victorious Army.

Next you are not certain, that either Fortune  
 will favour you, or that those you play with,  
 will not cozen you ; for Play is grown a meer  
 Art and Trade, or rather a Mystery, in which  
 there is interwoven such a Composition of  
 Slights, and a Shuffling together of so many De-  
 ceits, as I dare not have the least pretending  
 thought to decypher any of those many Arts  
 and Cheats in it. But I shall freely declare to  
 you in few words my opinion of Gaming,  
 which is no other, than that I esteem it to be of  
 the same Nature of Fire and Water, which still  
 make good Servants, but ever bad Masters.  
 Play is good whilst 'tis kept within the Bounds  
 of Moderation and Innocent Divertisement,  
 but very bad when it overflows and swells into  
 a Habit and Calling, and runs into Covetous-  
 ness, Passion, Cursing and Swearing, which is  
 the usual Fruit that grows on the common Tree  
 of deep Gaming, and are the ordinary Livery  
 Sins which generally wait on most great Gam-  
 blers.

But as I esteem him beside his Reason, that  
 plays much, so all may well esteem me beside  
 my Subject, if I should write more of it ; I  
 shall therefore return to my Theam, and advise  
 all Publick Writers, especially of Disputes, to  
 reflect on the impossibility of avoiding the Com-  
 mon Enemy Censure, since 'tis not in the power  
 of a Scholars great Learning, or of a Poets  
 high Muse, or of a Philosophers deep Know-  
 ledg, or of a States-man most subtile Policy ;

nor

nor indeed is it in any Mortals skill, so to manage and steer their Discourses, as to avoid running against some Rock of Offence or other, it being impossible to turn ones Writing into so many several Shapes, and kinds of Dresses, at the same time, so as to make it suit and agree with every Readers opinion, as 'tis for one Wind to carry several Ships to every Point of the Compass, or for one Dish to please all Palates; for if you praise this Mans Opinion, you must necessarily discommend all others that totally differ from his; and so you cannot avoid, (though by a Side-Wind,) blaming the one, by crying up the other.

And the like Measures extend to most sorts of Persons, and kinds of Actions, and varieties of Belief, which your Writing must unavoidably make War with, by contradicting some Mens Opinions, Actions, or Interest, and so must prove an Enemy either to what this Man Writes, that Man Speaks, or the other Man does; and such will be sure to censure you, for blaming them.

And 'tis indeed but customary, and what you ought to expect, that if you Write against them, they should speak against you; and upon true consideration, we shall soon be satisfied, that 'tis not a Mans great Parts, true Vertue, high Quality, Sublime Wit, or Pious Intentions, can Life-guard him from Censure, which is a-kin to Death, that spareth neither good nor bad.

I grant that if a Publick Writer were only to lose his Labour for his Pains, in case he writ ill, (I mean in others Opinions, for I fancy

few did ever in their own,) and so his Book did not take well; then indeed 'twere nothing to make publick Essays of Writing, and to try their Young Wits, as we do New Pens, by a little Scribbling with them; but alas, Worldly Censure is often quicker than Heavenly Judgments, for those chiefly begin where Life ends, for after Death comes the great Judgment; but experience teacheth us, that as soon as ever a Book is delivered from the Press, and is born in Print, it no sooner Peeps abroad, but Censure falls on, who is a very Severe Active Enemy, and follows close in the Rear of all New Books, and still carries with it the dismal or pleasing Sentence of Guilty, or not Guilty; that is, whether the Writer has plaid the Wit or the Fool; for really now a-days, most Men and Women are grown such Nice Critical Censurers, as they will hardly allow a Neuter State between them.

I fancy the Censurers office to be much of the nature of the Coroner's Inquest, whose business is to View, Examine and Search into the Wounds and Scars of the Body, and then to tell his Opinion of them to the Jury, who most commonly finds it Murder.

And so all Censurers, after Surveying and Searching a New Book, ('tis more than an even lay) they esteem the Author and Publisher of it so Dull, as to judge him guilty of Foolishly Murdering his own Time, and consequently of Wasting that of every one's who Reads it. And as unnatural Deaths are the grand employ, and main benefit of the Coroner's Office, so Censurers Wit is chiefly nourished by others  
want



want of it ; as Doctors of Physick live by others Sickness.

'Tis also worth consideration, that Censure like Infection, spares few in its reach, and seizes as well on the best Polish'd Wits, as on the most dull Daubers of Paper ; for not only those that are the greatest Pretenders, but really the most Meritorious in pure Refin'd Writing, though they have never so high flying Wits, yet they are not certain with all their topping Muse to soar above the Lowest Censure ; so wicked and envious is our Age, that if any ones Vertue and Merits do but shine out bright and clear, others will make it their business at least to Eclipse, if not extinguish them by their detracting and false Censures ; and not only the most Sublime Wits, but the most Vertuous and Pious Writers, in Publishing a Book, do in a manner declare a War against all other Opinions that are differing and opposite to theirs, and are but like the noble Flag Ships in a Naval Fight, which though they are still the very Best and Ablest Ships of the Fleet, yet they are so far from reaping any Priviledge by it, as they are still sure to be more shot at, than all others for it.

In short, most Censurers are like Fierce Chain'd Mastiffs, which bark and fly at all that come near them ; no matter whether they deserve it, 'tis a sufficient Quarrel that they come across them.

And now to conclude all in a word, for my Design is to be short ; ( I wish all Censurers were so in their Censuring, ) the best Antidote, I know, against the Censurers Venomous

Breath, is First to be very strict and careful how, and what one Writes, and then to be careless what they do or say; according to the Old Wise Proverb, *What is past ones help, ought to be past ones care*; for really nothing sooner quenches a Censurers bitter inflam'd Tongue, than a constant, cold, and slighting neglect of what he says.

And now I have given you a small Taste of that severe and bitter Cup of Censure, which most Publick Writers must drink of, and very many suffer by; I esteem it now more than full time to consider, as sure the Reader must, why I mind so much the Mote in anothers Eye, and do not see, or at least have not spoke of the Beam in my own; therefore having now finished all my Discourses, there remains only this Conclusion, that as 'tis now in my Power to put an end to the Readers trouble, so I wish 'twere also now in my Power to put an end to all Censuring Disputes; which I confess is a wish that favours of self-interest, since by it I own they may as truly condemn me for my dull Writing, as I can justly blame them for their sharp Censuring: therefore to moderate as much as I can their Fierceness, I shall now decline accusing them, the better to excuse my self, and beg their pardon for the trouble these weak Discourses has given them, not only for their dullness, for that may afford them matter to rally at, but for their tediousness, which can only serve to tire their Patience with.

And now I will only add, and tell you, that all the Armour I have to defend this  
poor

poor Brat of a Scribe, against the many Shots of Censure, are only these Few Slight Reasons.

My First is this, being but a very little Book, and my only one, 'twill I hope protect me at least from being ranked among those Fools who are known such by their too much Writing, as some are by their too much Laughing.

Next I fancy 'twould be unreasonable, that the Censorious should Rob me of the Innocent Divertisement of Writing these little Essays, and not fall on the great number of Writers, who are such Bold Pretenders to High Fancy, and Great Wit, as they believe their own Parts are above all others; and therefore I hope such Sharp Criticks will be so Wise to themselves, and so Civil to me, as to view the great numbers of Books, that lye exposed to Publick Censure; some for the Folly of Writing Ill, others for the vain Pride of believing they Write well, when others think they Write but very dull; and having such Crowds of these kinds of Books in their Power, I hope they will be the more ready to pass by this my little Scribe.

When I writ these Discourses, 'twas not with the least Design to shew my Wit, but meerly to pass my time in the Country, without the least vain pretending thought of fancying them worthy to pass for good Current Sterling Coin abroad, using them only as slight Metal, or Counters at home; not intended for Publick View, but for meer Private and Home Divertisement.

And

And therefore for the Two-handed and Sharp Edged Sword of Censure, which so Criticizes on all Writings within its reach, I am sure these Discourses have the same kind of Protection against Censurers, as Poverty has against Thieves and Robbers; for I can truly make the same Answer to the Prying Critick, as a good poor Old Gentleman, who had Sold all his Lands and Goods, and was Rich in nothing but Years, (which is but such a troublesome sort of Wealth, as the Gout is a sign of Long Life,) told the Robbers who attack'd his House by Night, in hopes to meet a Booty; but the Poor Old Gentleman knowing their Ill Design, as well as his own great Want, called to them to be gone, telling them, *They ought not to hope to find any thing in his House by Night, when he himself could find nothing in it by Day.*

So I can truly tell the Cenforious, who think to make a Booty of this Book, That 'tis not worth wasting their time, to search into its Defects, which are but very Imperfect Discourses, chiefly Writ to moderate the Pain of the Gout, and prevent the misery of Idleness, without the least vanity of Wit or Learning.

So that you will find nothing in this, but what is Humble and Mean, they being quite naked and destitute of all manner of Wit or Eloquence, or indeed of any thing that can be agreeable, or advantagious to the Reader, (except the Exercise of his Patience :) And besides all its Wants and Imperfections, I am sensible it cannot deserve more to be undervalued for the Dullness of its Writing, than it does to be overlook'd for the smallness of its Size; which makes me  
both

both hope and expect, that this Small Book  
will prove as much beneath the Wounding  
Darts of Censure, as the Ren is below the de-  
stroying Shot of the Fowler.

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*FINIS.*

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(10)

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*Books Published by the Honourable  
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... the dimensions of its size; which makes me  
both

Cowley 3.4 30

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